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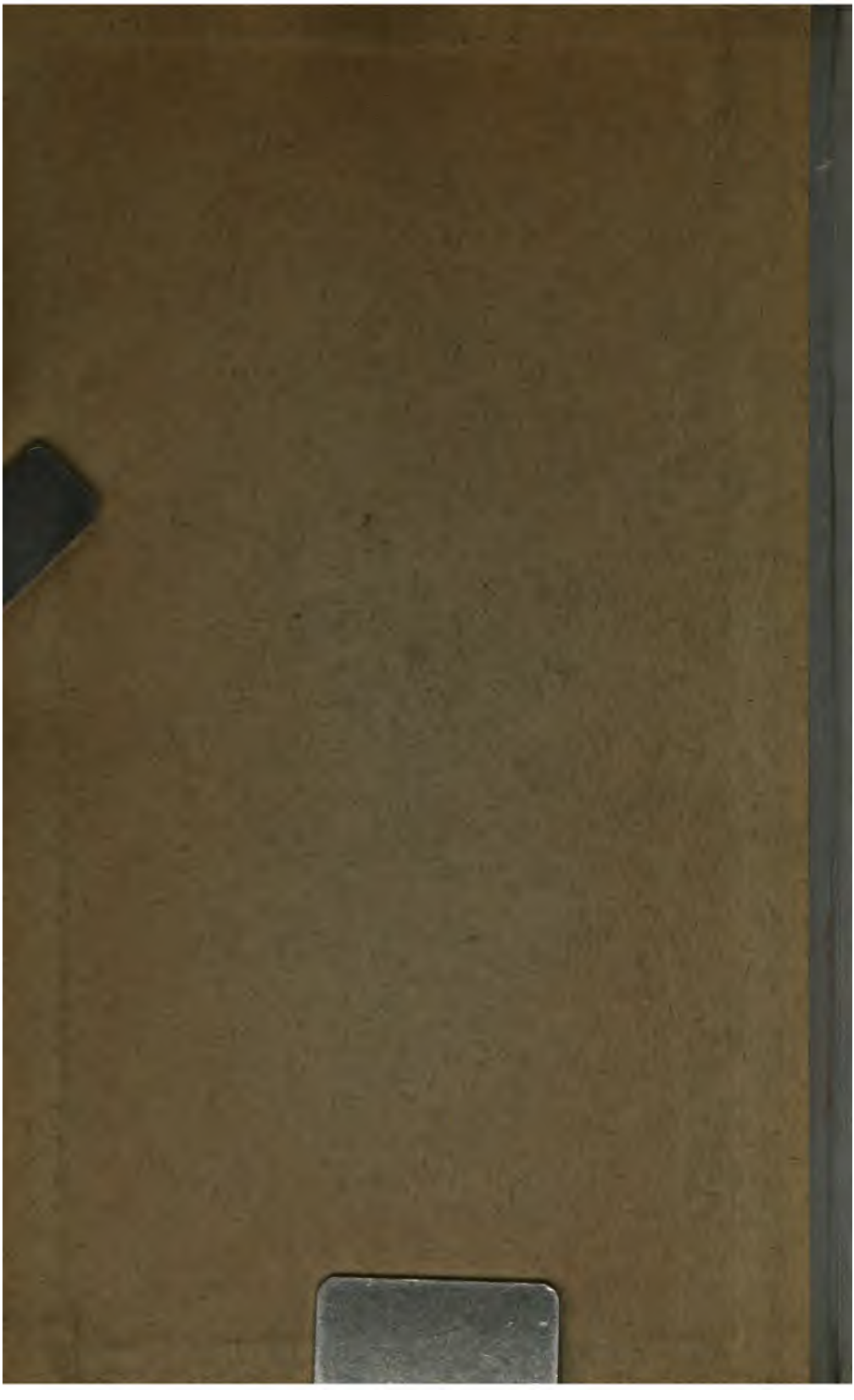

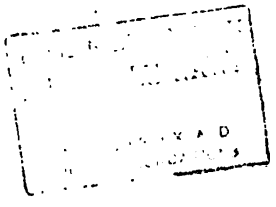

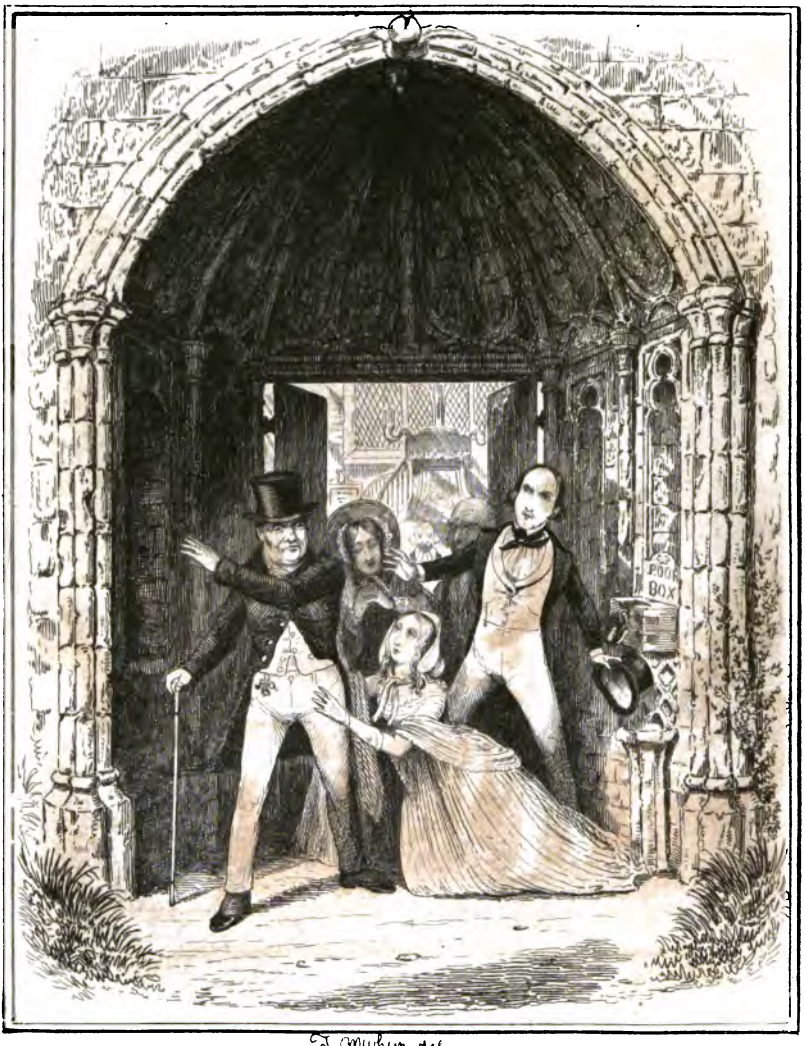

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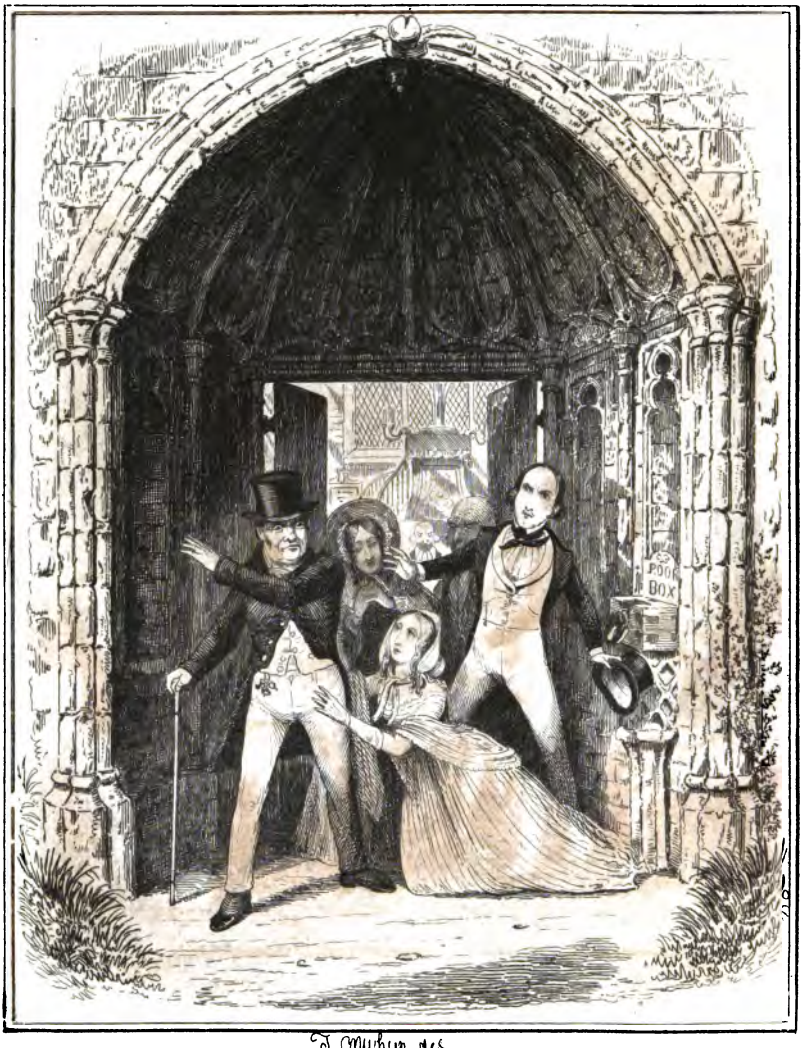

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THE PRINCE

OR

GEORGE ST. GEORGE JULIAN.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH THE HERO AND HIS AFFECTIONATE FAMILY ARE INTRODUCED.

ARCHIBALD JULIAN, the grandfather of George—who by virtue of his surpassing ingenuity acquired the aristocratic *sobriquet* of The Prince—was, in a commercial point of view, a remarkably successful, and therefore a highly respectable man. He married early and was then extremely poor, but his marriage, which then appeared to be most improvident, laid the foundation of that fortune which it prompted him to raise, and which, had it not been for that stimulus, would probably never have been raised by him at all.

Having acquired by experience a practical knowledge of the value of money, he proposed to himself at starting to realize ten thousand pounds, correctly calculating that it would yield five hundred a year, upon which he might live in a comfortable state of independence. The possession of ten thousand pounds formed, then, the very acme of his ambition. He wanted no more: he cared to realize no more: if he could but make that he would retire and gather happiness, not only from affluence *per se*, but from acts of benevolence to which at that period his heart very strongly inclined.

With this laudable object in view, he accordingly, soon after his marriage, borrowed the sum of fifty pounds, and commenced on his own account. He was zealous, indefatigable, up at it early and late, and as he continued to adhere to those economic principles of which early adversity had taught him the worth, the effects of his zeal soon began to appear; and as the whole of his speculations were signally successful, he in a few years became a ten-thousand-pound man.

While, however, this sum was being realized, his views on the subject materially changed; the ladder of his ambition grew higher; it had another step, which he did not see before, but which he saw then distinctly, and to gain which he perceived the possession of twenty thou-

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sand pounds to be essential. He therefore again set to work: he made twenty thousand pounds, and then another appeared prescribing fifty thousand pounds: he worked his way up to that, and then discovered another, which on being reached enabled him to see still another! —in short, the ladder grew with the growth of his wealth, keeping always one step in advance.

This was not however the only effect of his journey: when he arrived at the point he had first proposed, he lived at the rate of four hundred a year; on arriving at the second he brought his private expenditure down to three hundred; on reaching the third he reduced it to two; when the fourth was attained he brought it to one; and thus diminished his "extravagances"—for that character then domestic comforts assumed—until he denied himself even the common necessaries of life.

In the early part of his career he was blessed with two sons, for whom he had the most ardent affection, and whom in due time he established in business, and endeavoured to impress upon their minds the necessity for depending upon their own individual exertions alone. But this was a lesson they never could learn: the necessity contended for, they could not perceive; they cherished diametrically opposite opinions upon this important point, and wanted to know why they should trouble their heads about business when the governor had plenty of money in store, and had no one to whom he could leave it but them; and it is an extraordinary and a most distressing fact, that when young men thus situated want to know this, there is no man who can satisfactorily tell them. It was beyond dispute proved in this case: they were consequently reckless and improvident; married penniless flirts in opposition to the will of the governor; neglected their business, and must have failed twenty times, had he not, for the sake of his own reputation, sustained them.

The thought of his having extravagant sons was a source of perpetual annoyance to him, of course; but that which more than all tended to alienate his fond affection from them was the bitter fact of their being extremely anxious to follow him as nominal mourners to the grave. They made no attempt whatever to disguise their feelings on this point. It was manifested daily. They did not, it is true, give expression to this generous sentiment before him; but they made their impatience known to all with whom he was connected, and through them it soon reached his ears.

At first the old gentleman felt very wretched, for he had then the affectionate feelings of a father; but when those feelings had been, by the indignities they constantly lavished upon him, destroyed, bitterness succeeded, and after a time even that was commingled with mirth.

"You wish me dead!" the old man would exclaim with a chuckle whenever they gave him fresh cause of annoyance. "I am a long time dying, am I not? I keep you both out of the property, don't I? You are impatient to squander it!—to squander it!—to gamble!—to make it fly!—to live a life of extravagance and aristocratic profligacy! to trick out your wives like dolls at a fair;—to keep your carriages and

your hunters! All in good time, my affectionate sons! I shall go by-and-by, and when I *do*—you'll know more!"

"What do you mean?" they would fiercely inquire.

"Live and learn," the old man would reply: "Live and learn."

And then he would chuckle again, as if he cherished some conception from which he derived inexpressible pleasure.

As he clung with greater tenacity to life, the nearer death approached him, and as he had been warned again and again that his devotion to business had a tendency to shorten its duration, he, on reaching the age of sixty, retired, and died on the following day.

The real cause of his mirth then appeared. He had not left either of his sons a single shilling;—the whole of his property was bequeathed to the children of the one—whichever it might be—who died first.

This came like a thunderbolt upon them. It confused all their faculties. What could they do? They had not even a life-interest in the estate. They had nothing! They could not wish for each other's death; nor could either wish for his own And yet, the property! Each, of course, wished to secure it to his own children; but then they both wished to live!

This placed them in a position of which they did not approve. They thought deeply upon the matter, very deeply: and as neither seemed to relish the idea of a premature death, they conceived various schemes for getting possession of the estate without anything occurring of a character so unpleasant. Among the rest it was suggested that one of them should counterfeit death, and then divide the estate fairly between them; but on carefully perusing the will, they discovered that the executors were expressly directed to view the body!—which they thought very hard.

At this period George had reached the age of fourteen, and was a fine, tall, shrewd, handsome boy, who had from infancy developed a strong desire to understand all that occurred within his cognizance; and the first time he heard his father and uncle lamenting the peculiar perplexity of the position in which they stood, he started up and exclaimed, "Father, let me see the will."

"For what, George?" inquired his father, smiling.

"You appear to be in some sort of difficulty about this affair: I want to see if it cannot be in any way got over."

Both his father and his uncle laughed loudly at this, and patted him playfully upon the head.

"Why do you laugh?" said George, gravely; for he felt most indignant. "If you do not wish to get yourselves out of it, why that's another thing; but if you do, you will let me see the will."

The brothers, although they still smiled, were amazed; and a copy of the will was produced and perused by George with an expression of the most intense thought. At length, placing his finger upon a particular line, he cried, "That's the point: just what I imagined."

Again the brothers laughed most heartily; and George, having looked at them for a moment as if he felt himself insulted, rolled up

the will with the utmost deliberation, and told them they might find it out themselves.

"Nay, George," said his uncle, encouragingly; "come, show us the point."

"What do you laugh at me for?" demanded George; "I don't like to be laughed at."

"Well, well: we'll not laugh. Come: now then; what is it?"

"Why look here," said George, again unrolling the will. "It says the executors must view the body. Now just suppose that you were to be drowned and never discovered: in that case how could they view the body?"

"Well done, Georgy!" cried his uncle; "certainly if the body were not found they could not view it."

"Very well, then: but don't call me Georgy; I don't like 'Georgy;' it sounds as if I were a child."

"To be sure it does," said his father; "and you're getting a man now. But what has drowning to do with it, George? Would you recommend your uncle to drown himself?"

"No, I don't care much about that; but suppose he were reported to be drowned, wouldn't that do as well?"

"Bravo, George!" exclaimed his uncle.

"Capital!" cried his father, who was in raptures with his boy, whom he naturally thought the finest fellow in the world.

"Or if that will not do," added George, "there is yet another thing. I was reading it only the other day: stop; I'll find it."

He hereupon went to the bookcase and brought down a volume of Shakspeare, and having hastily turned over the leaves, found and read the following passage:—

> "And, when thou art alone take thou this phial,
> And this distilled liquor; drink them off:
> When presently through all thy veins shall run
> A cold and drowsy humour, which shall seize
> Each vital spirit; for no pulse shall keep
> His natural progress, but surcease to beat.
> No warmth, no breath shall testify thou liv's.
> The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade
> To paly ashes;
> And in this borrowed likeness of shrunk death
> Thou shalt continue two and forty hours,
> And then awake as from a pleasant sleep."

"Now," said George, having read this passage with great deliberation and point, "I should just like to know what this sleepy stuff was; because that, you know, would be the very thing! Do you not think that the chemists could tell?"

"I fear not," said his father; "no, the other is the plan, if well managed."

"I like that best myself," observed George. "You or uncle could easily go out of the way, and be reported as drowned; and it isn't to be supposed, although they are instructed to view the body, that if

either of you really were drowned, they would keep this estate until the body could be found, and if never found, for ever."

Again George was highly applauded, not only by the brothers, but by his mother and aunt; neither of whom for one moment considered that they were applauding him for suggesting a falsehood. As the plan seemed easy of accomplishment, the brothers consulted together privately, and the result was that they determined that the uncle of George should suddenly disappear; that the estate should be claimed for his children who were of age; that when the property had been securely made over, it should be equally divided, and that in the event of any stir they should proceed to America together.

The preparations were therefore made, and the uncle vanished; when a fellow, who had been employed for the purpose, reported, that while on his barge, he saw a gentleman struggling in the river, and ultimately sink; and as this report was raised simultaneously with that of the uncle's mysterious disappearance, it was at once inferred that he was that gentleman, of course. The river was accordingly dragged with due zeal every day for a week, but no body could be found. He was advertised in all the local papers, for the purpose of making all sure; but as of course they received no answer to these advertisements, it was taken for granted that he was the man. The whole family in consequence went into mourning, and there was a great show of grief, and in the due course of time an application was made to the executors for the transfer of the property to the children of the deceased. The executors, who were honourable, straight-forward persons themselves, entertained no suspicion of the ruse; and therefore having heard the evidence of the person who gave an accurate description of the unfortunate individual, they felt certain that he was the man, and therefore did not feel justified in resisting the claim.

Just, however, as the business was about to be completed, the fellow who was to have been rewarded with five hundred pounds, communicated his great good fortune to his wife in strict confidence; and she being a very clever woman, was so delighted, that she told her sister, in confidence, and her sister confidentially told her husband, and the true state of the case confidentially flew from one to another, until the executors were told in strict confidence themselves; which had a very great effect, for the estate was withheld, and the departed, feeling quite sure then that it was useless for him to keep any longer out of the way, took an early opportunity of returning to his wretched, disconsolate widow, of course in due form.

The failure of this scheme much affected the whole family; so much were they despised, that their business gradually dwindled away, until they thought it expedient to fail. A quarrel then ensued about the division of the property they had concealed. They became bitter enemies. They hated each other with a most cordial hate; yet neither could wish the other dead!

Reconciliation was quite out of the question; they never could be reconciled; they lived in a state of enmity for nearly eight years, when the uncle died—a circumstance which his brother so sincerely regretted, that

in less than a week he died himself. This wounded the feelings of George deeply. If his father had but dropped off a week before, what a fortunate thing it would have been! Had he outlived his brother five years, or even one year, or even six months, it would not have been half such a pity; but the idea of his dying within a little week, was held by both George and his mother to be very distressing indeed.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH GEORGE TAKES HIS FIRST IMPORTANT STEP.

As all that his mother had now to procure the means of existence was an annuity of a miserable amount, George saw that it was time for him to begin to do something for himself. He had calculated, with a feeling of certainty, upon having his grandfather's property. He felt sure that his uncle would outlive his father, not only because his uncle was older, but because he was far more abstemious and less passionate. The fact of his being left penniless was therefore a heavy blow, especially as he had no resource, no friend, no profession to fly to. He was an excellent commercial scholar, and a good linguist; he had read much, and could write a clear and expeditious hand; and as he thought that although there might be thousands equally accomplished unemployed, if he came up to London he should be certain to meet with something. He therefore decided at once upon leaving home. But, the day before that on which he intended to start, while passing the house of Sir Richard Roughall—who had been knighted for some signal services he had rendered during a riot, while serving the office of mayor of the town—he saw his daughter Julia playing on the lawn; and although he had seen her before, he had never experienced those feelings with which she inspired him then. On that occasion, he bowed and raised his hat, which she deemed a most extraordinary occurrence, and, ceasing to play with her spaniel, blushed deeply, and timidly drew near her maid.

Having passed, George immediately proceeded home to analyze the feelings which then possessed him, and to perfect the scheme which he had on the instant conceived, while Julia was discussing the merits of the case with her maid, who was the only creature near her in whom she could confide.

Julia had been from infancy secluded from the world; she was a finely-formed, beautiful girl, full of ruddy health and spirits, one who delighted to romp about the garden with her dog, while her fair hair wantonly luxuriated in ringlets upon her shoulders. Beyond this garden she was never permitted to go, under any pretence, unaccompanied by her father. She had seen no society. Sir Richard gave no parties, received no visits, and went to corporation dinners only. He was a remarkably heavy, morose, selfish man, who prided himself upon his wealth and his title and, although extremely vulgar, thought no man superior to him-

self. He was incapable of much affection. He had treated his wife, whom he lost before he was knighted, most harshly; while his conduct to Julia, albeit his only child, was characterized by the most repulsive severity. He loved himself alone: he was a gross domestic tyrant: he kept Julia strictly from the society of men, that she might avoid the very snare into which he thus prepared her to fall. He would not have a man in the house. He would never allow her to accept an invitation. She had never been addressed on any occasion by a gentleman, for he had never suffered one to approach her. She had acquired the various little accomplishments which country young ladies in general are taught: she could, as he termed it, "jabber" French and Italian,—she could "go ding-dong upon the piano, she could "hop," and "draw," and "squall;" but poor Julia knew as little of mankind as if there had been no other man upon earth than Sir Richard, and as he was a very unfavourable sample, her ideas of men in the aggregate, derived from studying him, were not of the most brilliant character. Her home was her world: she was a slave to her father, who harshly exacted the most implicit obedience, and was invariably most tyrannous when she tried most to please him.

That Julia, being in this unenviable position, should feel delighted when she beheld a fine handsome young fellow bow to *her* so respectfully, and with so much grace, is not strange. It inspired her at once with novel feelings, and filled her mind with new ideas. She was able to think of nothing but the elegant stranger, and during the day her father, noticing the change, struck her several times in consequence most severely.

In the mean time, George was laying out his plans to obtain an interview with her. He knew that Sir Richard was wealthy, having realized, as an ironfounder, an immense sum of money during the war; but as he also knew his imperious, brutal disposition, he felt certain that he would never entertain his suit, and that therefore the only prospect he had was that of an elopement, trusting to time and circumstances to effect a reconciliation. His journey to London was therefore postponed, and the first step proposed was, to bribe Julia's maid to convey a letter to her mistress, couched in terms of the most ardent affection, and begging of her in the most romantic strain, to save him from utter despair by granting him an interview for a few brief moments. This letter was written, and George the next morning proceeded towards the house which was situated a short distance out of the town. As he passed, he saw Julia again, and again he bowed gracefully, and Julia in her innocence returned the salute. She watched him anxiously until she could see him no longer, but felt so tremulous that she scarcely could breathe.

This of course inspired George with additional hope, and keeping within view of the gate, he remained in the full expectation of seeing the servant pass out. After watching impatiently for nearly an hour, his expectation was realized. He saw the servant leave the house alone, and he lost no time in approaching her.

"You are living with Sir Richard, I believe?" said he.

"Yes, sir," replied the girl, respectfully.

"Your sweet young lady is quite well, I hope?"

"I thank you sir, quite."

"I thought that I never saw her look so beautiful as when I passed yesterday morning."

"Are you the gentleman that bowed to her when we were in the garden?"

"The same."

"Dear! how she has been talking about you, to be sure!"

"Indeed!"

"Oh! you have never been out of her head."

"I am delighted to hear it. You are her confidant, I presume?"

"Oh she never thinks of keeping any secret from me. We are like two sisters more than any thing else."

"I am glad that she has one near her, so worthy of her esteem."

The girl acknowledged the compliment in silence.

"You have it in your power," continued George, "to do me the highest favour I can ask."

"What me, sir?"

"You. And I feel that I can place implicit confidence in one in whom your charming young mistress confides?"

"You may, sir; but what can I do?"

"Deliver this letter on your return."

"Oh, dear me, I mustn't. Sir Richard would kill me!"

"How is Sir Richard to know of it? I shall not tell him, and I am quite sure that you will not do so."

"Oh, not for the world!"

"Why then need you fear?"

"Oh, *if* he should discover it, he'll surely be the death of us all."

"If you were an ordinary person," said George, with an irresistible expression, "a person of no mind, of no soul, of no discretion, then, indeed, I should fear to trust you with this commission; but as I perceive—you will believe me when I state to you that I am not one who would for a moment descend to flattery—but as I perceive that you are a person of intellect, and superior altogether to the station you at present occupy in society, I must say that I have not the slightest hesitation in trusting you with that which is essential to the realization of my proudest hope, having the highest confidence in the superiority of your mind, and in the soundness of your judgment."

"Well sir," said the girl, who was highly delighted, "I'll undertake to give it to Miss Julia, but—"

"You are a good, kind creature. I knew that you would. I could tell in a moment, for there is always something in the expression of an intelligent countenance by which confidence is created at once."

Jane felt at this moment on the highest conceivable terms with herself, for there was not a single syllable in this speech, that failed to meet the approbation of her heart. She took the letter, and as George, with many appropriate expressions of gratitude, pressed her hand and left a sovereign therein, she said with the utmost generosity,—

"Nay, sir, I do not wish this; upon my word I do not."

"Keep it," said George, "for my sake, and as an earnest of the bright reward you may expect for your advice and assistance, for I shall have to solicit your advice, and I feel that I shall have your assistance."

"You shall, sir; depend upon that."

"You are a dear good girl, and to prove how perfect is the confidence I repose in you, I will explain to you in substance the contents of that letter. I am desperately enamoured of your beautiful young mistress; how dearly, how passionately I love her, I need not describe to you, for I know that you have a fond heart, capable of understanding and appreciating the feelings with which I am inspired. My object is to obtain an interview with her in whom my hopes are concentred. I have solicited that happiness, I must leave it with you to arrange."

"I'll do my very best, sir."

"I know it; I feel that you will. You need not say that I have explained all this, she will in all probability show you the letter."

"Oh, that she will; that she is certain to do."

"I have said that I anxiously wait her reply; could I not have one to-day?"

"Come here this afternoon, say at four o'clock, precisely; I shall be able to run out then, and tell you all about it. I'll manage it. Depend upon me."

"I do, I do depend upon you," said George; who again pressed her hand very warmly, and then took his leave in the most graceful manner; and as he walked from her, she turned twenty times to admire his figure, which in her view was elegant in the extreme.

As George had weighed every sentence he uttered, and watched its effect upon Jane, he felt convinced that he had propitiated her favour, and that therefore as an ambassadress, she would be most influential.

Nor was he deceived. Immediately on her return she delivered the letter, and portrayed his characteristics—not only as far as they had been developed, but as far as the power of her vivid imagination could extend—in colours the most brilliant and enchanting. He was a dear of a man. Oh! so handsome, so graceful, so affectionate, so elegant, none could surpass him! She was sure, that if he had solicited an interview with her, all the fathers in Christendom conjoined, should never prevent its being granted.

Poor Julia! She never before felt so confused. She trembled from head to foot. Her heart throbbed almost audibly, while her breathing kept time with her pulse. She had never experienced feelings at all comparable with those with which her soul was then inspired; albeit her delight was mingled with apprehension. To be beloved! Oh! at the thought how her heart leaped with joy, how her bosom swelled with rapture! She had heard of love, she had read of love, and had felt that its power had been exaggerated; but now how strongly, how deeply did she feel that it was not. She had seen him who had declared his affection in a strain so passionate: she had not only seen him in reality, she had seen him in her dreams and had heard him in imagination vow

eternal love! It was but the previous evening that she had read the marriage service; it was but the previous night, that in a reverie she had heard him say that he would cherish her fondly and for ever. How then could she doubt his affection? Answer ye who *will* conceive the inmost feelings of one who having experienced peculiar harshness from infancy, hears for the first time that she is adored, and sees before her an avenue of happiness, leading to a diadem sparkling with joys.

And, yet, how could she act? She had never before felt confinement irksome. She never deemed her father's tyranny tyrannous till then. What was to be done? What could she do? What if she were to receive him? She dared not do it! The thought filled her guileless heart with alarm! Not all the entreaties of Jane could prevail: she could not, she dared not give her consent, although in withholding that consent she felt wretched.

The hours passed heavily both to her and to him whom she felt she loved dearly; but when four o'clock did at last arrive, Jane, as Sir Richard and Julia sat down to dine, ran out to meet George who, of course, was there panting with suspense. To him she hastily communicated all that had passed, and made him truly dejected.

"Is there no hope, then?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, yes; come to-night, do not despair. Between this and then I may manage to persuade her; at any rate, I'll do all I can."

"A thousand thanks!" said George. "At what hour shall I come?"

"At ten, you must not come before. At that time we all go to bed. You can get over the gate, don't be afraid, never mind the board about man-traps and spring-guns, we have nothing of the sort; come you round to the back and I'll manage, at all events, to tell you whether Miss Julia will see you or not."

George again and again thanked her, and having begged of her to use all the influence at her command, pressed her hand, sent his love to her gentle mistress, and they parted.

During this hasty interview, Sir Richard was pursuing his old brutal conduct. On sitting down to dinner, Julia was utterly unable to eat, which the gross knight no sooner perceived than he exclaimed, with a dark scowl, "What's the matter now?"

"Nothing, papa," replied Julia, tremulously.

"Nothing! then why don't you peck?"

Julia again tried, but as her progress was but slow, Sir Richard who had been watching her, cried,

"Are you going to eat a little faster?"

"I have no appetite, papa, indeed I have not."

"No appetite! You want to be locked up again, madam, and kept on bread and water for a month. I'll warrant that I'll bring back your appetite. Do you hear? If you don't eat, I'll have the victuals crammed down your throat. What do you mean?"

"Pray do not treat me ill, papa," said Julia bursting into tears. "Indeed, indeed, I cannot help it."

This appeal, mild and gentle though it was, made Sir Richard foam with rage. He had never before heard from her any thing like it. He

was amazed! She had heretofore borne all in silence, and hence she had no sooner spoken than, with a most ferocious aspect, he struck the table with his knife and fork, and while maintaining them in an upright position demanded fiercely to know what she meant.

"Treat you *ill!*" he cried, "*Ill!*—I treat you—impudence! Out of my sight! If you stay another minute, I'll kick you out!—Start!"

Poor Julia knowing the violence of his disposition, and that he seldom indeed failed to carry his threats into execution, instantly left the room sobbing.

She felt his unkindness then acutely, she had scarcely deemed it unkindness before, for she had scarcely known what kindness in men was; but when she contrasted the treatment she received from her father with that which had been promised by George,—and her imagination being unchecked by experience prompted her to regard aught but kindness from him impossible,—it filled her heart with sorrow, and her eyes with scalding tears.

As Sir Richard, whenever he felt himself grossly offended, would sulk for a week or a month as it suited his fancy, and would not suffer his beautiful slave to come near him until she had written what he happened at the time to consider a sufficient number of penitential letters imploring his forgiveness, and begging to be restored to his favour, Julia knew that as this offence was deemed most gross, she should have for some considerable period no one to speak to but her maid; and when Jane, who immediately on hearing of the outburst, went to console her, her mind was well prepared to receive any favourable impression, and to entertain any pleasurable project. The occurrence was therefore deemed fortunate by Jane, who at once renewed her suit: denounced Sir Richard's unreasonable severity, applauded to the seventh heaven "the delightful young gentleman" by whom her mistress was adored, and eventually succeeded so well that Julia, on being informed that he would be there at the time appointed, tremblingly consented to see him for one moment from the back-parlour window.

All being thus arranged, time seemed to rest or move so idly, that its progress could scarcely be perceived. It did progress, however, for eventually the clocks struck nine; and George, at that hour wearied with the delay, which he deemed intolerable, leaped the garden-gate.

It was a hazy night, and the moon, having struggled for some time to pierce the mist, had succeeded just sufficiently to render perceptible the vapour which the meadows had exhaled; while, with the exception of the sheep-bells in the distance, all was silent as the tomb. In the drawing-room lights were seen still. He knew that the hour appointed had not arrived, but he came thus early in the full conviction that his suspense would be less painful there. He soon, however, found the reverse to be the case; time hung with heaviness almost insupportable. He found a garden-chair, upon which he sat for some minutes, and then arose; but as he dared not walk upon the paths,—for the night was so still that every step he took almost startled *him*,—he was compelled to confine himself to this seat. And there he remained, holding his watch, and feeling the minute-hand ever and anon as it moved almost imper-

ceptibly. At length, having past half an hour in the most painful suspense, he was startled by the bolts of the front-door being withdrawn, and immediately afterwards some one approached. The footsteps were heavy. They could not be those of a female! Had he been seen to enter? Had he been betrayed? Had he been induced to come there for the purpose of being violently ejected? The sound still approached. He could just discern the figure of a tall heavy man, when creeping beneath a currant bush he made up his mind to the worst. The figure reached the spot; it was Sir Richard, who made a dead stand, and raising his gun which had been already cocked, fired directly over the bush. George was motionless: he scarcely breathed, he did not think that he had been hit: he felt no pain. "It may be his custom," thought he, to go round before he retires; and this supposition was strengthened when Sir Richard on the instant deliberately walked back. Still George attempted not to stir: he listened with the most intense interest to every sound, heard Sir Richard mount the steps, scrape his shoes, re-enter the house, close the door and fasten it, when as all became perfectly still again, he rose, and for the first time discovered that he had been thrown into a state of steaming perspiration.

This incident in some degree relieved him from his impatience, it caused a little time to fly quickly, and as his congratulations on his narrow escape occupied a little more, it did not seem long before he heard the town clocks strike ten. He then became all anxiety again, the hour had arrived, and he felt more unnerved than even when he lay concealed beneath the bush. He listened to every breath and strained his eyes through the darkness to discover if possible the approach of a light; but no, all was silent and dark. Just, however, as he began to despair a window was opened cautiously, and he distinctly heard some one cry "Hist!"

George listened for a moment, he felt relieved, and yet, as no light was to be seen, he could not but think it just possible for it to be a *ruse* to bring him forward in order that the worthy knight might have another shot.

"Hist, hist!" again cried the voice, when as at the moment he saw one female form attempting to draw another away, he approached.

"Be cautious," said Jane, as she saw him approach, "tread lightly, pray, don't speak a word, Miss Julia will see you, but only for two minutes."

"Exeellent girl!" said George in a whisper, and at the moment the trembling Julia appeared.

"Did you wish to speak with me?" she inquired, although scarcely able to speak.

"My sweetest!" said George, passionately pressing her hand. "I did wish to explain to you how ardently, how fondly I love you; yet now that you are before me, my heart is so full that I cannot express the joy I feel. Pardon me for presuming to seek an interview with you thus: believe me I would not have done so had I been in possession of any other means of securing this happiness."

Poor Julia knew not what to say, she felt dreadfully alarmed but feeling that she ought to make some observation, faltered out artlessly, "I hope I have not kept you long?"

"Not long; no not very long, and yet it did—it did to me seem an age. I at one time feared that I had been discovered, for Sir Richard came into the garden with his gun, but he did not perceive me."

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed Julia. "What a mercy you escaped Had he seen you, you would surely have been killed."

"And you would not have had me killed?"

"Not for the world!" exclaimed Julia, fervently; "I would not have any one," she added, checking herself—"killed."

"Bless you!" said George, as he kissed her trembling hand. "You have made me so happy! You cannot imagine how happy I feel, I cannot speak as I ought to speak, I am so happy!"

There was a pause. Julia's heart throbbed with violence, she knew not how she felt, she was now in a state of ecstasy, now in pain. She wished him to remain silent, yet she wished to hear him speak, for his voice was the sweetest she had ever heard; its music thrilled through her veins, vibrated through her heart, each syllable striking the tenderest chord. George felt enchanted, he held her hand in his, and pressed it and kissed it again and again.

At length he cried, "My beautiful girl! I never before knew what it was to love, but now I feel that I could die in your presence with pleasure. You are not cruel, I know that you are not, you would not wish to see me wretched: something—indeed I know not what it is, but something tells me that the feelings which I experience are reciprocal—that you do not, I mean, absolutely hate me?"

"Oh no!" said Julia, with the innocence of a child, "indeed—indeed I do not—nay, I love you—forgive me—I did not mean—but—I *do* love all who love me! I cannot help it.

"You are an angel. You make me each moment admire you more and more."

Again there was a pause, during which George held the hand of Julia to his heart; for although his views before were purely mercenary, he now felt that he did in reality love her, and that, moreover, her happiness and his were inseparable. Still neither cared to speak. Their hearts were too full. They both felt that they loved and were beloved in return, and conceived that no happiness, no joy could be superior to that.

"Dear me, what dull lovers you are!" cried Jane, "Why don't you rattle on? *I* could teach you to make love much better than that, I am sure!"

"Superficial love," said George, "may require words to denote its existence, as the shallow stream will perpetually ripple; but our love, my Julia, is deep, and flows calmly and in silence, and will in silence continue to flow, unless a storm should come to develop its power."

"May that storm never arise!" said Julia.

"My sweetest! to that I will say, Amen; and yet, my dear Julia, we

must expect it. My position in society, as you are probably aware, is not brilliant, I therefore feel that my addresses to her who is my soul's idol would never be sanctioned by Sir Richard.

"Oh dear yes!" exclaimed Julia, "why not?"

"Simply, my love, because I am not in a higher position."

"But if you were to speak to him he would like you very much, I am sure, that he would, and invite you to the house, and then we should pass many, many delightful days in each other's society."

"My gentle girl, we must not expect it. Were I to mention the subject to him he would spurn me."

"Oh dear me, no! he would like you exceedingly! I am sure of it."

And it did appear to Julia to be impossible for him not to gain the esteem of her father. She could not conceive how he could fail indeed to love him; but George, whose policy it was to break to her his intentions by degrees, smiled, and continued to press her hand in silence.

To Jane all this was excessively tedious; for time, whose progress was imperceptible to them, hung heavily upon her. She could not enter into the merits of the case. It was not interesting to her. She was not at all amused: she conceived it, in short, to be dull work indeed; and therefore became rather fidgety, and bustled about the room and trimmed the lamp, and hemmed constantly, and was sure that Miss Julia would catch her death standing so long at the window, and intimated that it was getting very late. and that it was not impossible for Sir Richard to dream of the circumstance, and to come down and find his dream realized, which would be very dreadful!

Neither Julia nor George, however, had the smallest fear on either of these well-conceived grounds, nor were they at all in haste; but Jane did at length induce him to look at his watch, when of course he was astonished to find it past midnight, Julia's two minutes having exceeded two hours.

"Envious Time!" said George. "Taking no delight in happiness, it flies with eagle's wings when pleasure reigns, but scarcely moves when pain is in the ascendant. It grieves me to say farewell, my Julia, yet prudence as well as Jane prompts me now to take leave. Still neither Jane nor prudence must force me from you until you have consented to let me come again.

"It is not improper?" said Julia.

"I hope that you will never suppose me capable of suggesting—"

"No, no, believe me I would not for the world. But I should like it better if my papa were apprised of your visits."

"If he were to know, if he were even to suspect, my dearest girl, that I love you, this visit would be my last."

"Then he must *not* know."

"Let me then come to-morrow evening?"

"But do not, for heaven's sake come before the time. Papa invariably goes round the garden with his gun, and if he were to see you, the consequence, I am sure, would be dreadful; therefore pray do not come until ten;—but you will not be later than that?"

"I will not. And now, my sweetest love, good night! good night!

You will think of me, Julia? I feel that you will, because I cannot but feel that you know I love you fondly, and shall be ever devoted and true. You do believe me?"

"I do, indeed I do."

"Bless you, my Julia! bless you! *good* night!—good night!"

George again pressed her hand, and kissed it with ardour. Still he was not satisfied: he lingered even then!

"I have to whisper *one* word," said he at length, and as Julia bent her ear towards him, he said again, "God bless you!" and kissed her cheek.

He then left the garden, and Julia listened until she was assured of his safety, and remained at the window even after that. She felt as if she wished to say good night once more, but as Jane, to whom the interview had not been very entertaining, soon broke the charm, she returned with her mind richly laden with the germs of a long enchanting dream.

On the following evening of course George was there, and on the evening which succeeded; after which, as Julia became more confiding, their interviews took place at the window no longer, the door was opened, and they conversed in one of the rooms; but George, in order as well to create still more confidence as to show that he placed the utmost reliance upon Jane, never allowed her to be absent for a moment. And thus things went on for three weeks, when Julia's consent to an elopement having been gained, the day was fixed, and they began to prepare.

The old maiden housekeeper, however, entertaining strong suspicions that something was afoot more than she had been informed of, and being an extremely discreet, prudent person, very correctly communicated her thoughts to Sir Richard, who immediately commenced a strict watch; for he himself very strongly suspected something, in consequence of his having received no penitential letters from Julia. Still, with all his zeal he was not able to discover any thing, and matters went on delightfully with the lovers up to the night previous to that on which the elopement had been fixed to take place.

On that memorable night George of course came as usual, and had been for some time in Julia's sitting-room, vowing eternal fidelity and dwelling upon the prospect of permanent happiness which then brightly opened before them, when suddenly footsteps were heard upon the stairs.

"Hark!" cried George in a whisper, which chilled the blood both of Julia and of Jane; and Julia clung to him as to her natural protector, exclaiming in alarm, "We are lost!"

"What shall we do?—Heavens!" cried Jane, as the footsteps passed the door.

"Hush!" whispered George, who on listening heard two persons cautiously creeping up stairs. "They have passed us."

"Oh!" cried Jane, "what are we to do? We shall all be murdered! what are we to do?"

George raised his hand to enjoin silence, and presently the door of a room above was dashed open, and "Julia!" was called by Sir Richard.

"They are now in your chamber," cried Jane. "Oh dear, oh dear, what shall we do?"

"Be calm," said George, "be calm; be calm. Put out the lights and appear to be asleep. I can drop from the window into the garden."

"Oh! you will be killed!" exclaimed Julia.

"No, my love, no; believe me it is not high!"

"Julia! Julia!" shouted Sir Richard from above.

"Jane!" *screamed* the affrighted housekeeper. "*Jane!*"

The lights were extinguished, and as George was endeavouring to disengage himself from Julia, who still clung to him firmly that he might not take the dangerous leap, Sir Richard dashed into the room.

"Why!—what!—what!—" he convulsively shouted. "Villain!—what right have you here?"

"Papa!—dear papa!" exclaimed Julia, frantically darting towards her father, as he was about to assail George. "Oh! I am to blame!—I alone! Papa!—kill me, but do not injure him!"

"Baggage!" groaned the enraged knight, who raised his arm with a view of felling her to the ground: but that arm was arrested by George, who exclaimed fiercely, "Hold!—you are her father; but even though you are, you must not strike her in my presence, I cannot bear it!"

"Villain!—Beggar!" cried Sir Richard! "*I* know you! What right have you here?"

"I am neither a villain nor a beggar," retorted George; "and although I have strictly no right to be here, sir, I'll not be maltreated, nor shall you strike her!"

"Are you married?" demanded the knight, who was awed by the manly, determined look of George; for although he was a gross, heartless tyrant, still was he a cowardly slave. "Are you married?"

"If they are not," interposed the ancient housekeeper, "they ought to be."

"They *shall* be!" cried Sir Richard; "I'll not lose sight of him until they are!"

"I am willing to remain in your presence," said George, coolly, but firmly, "until the ceremony has been performed."

"You shall remain, villain! I'll not be disgraced. *I'll* not support——Out of my sight!" he added, addressing Julia, fiercely, "you *shall* have your *beggar!*"

George pressed Julia's hand, as he resigned her to Jane, who was half dead with fright, but who led her from the room, closely followed by the old housekeeper, whose mouth was wide open, and whose hands and eyes were fervently upraised.

"Now, sir," said George, when he and Sir Richard were alone, "let me reason with you calmly."

"Silence!" cried Sir Richard; "I'll not hear a word!"

As George happened to have no great desire to speak, he *was* silent; when Sir Richard seized the poker, and having stirred the fire as if he had a strong inclination to break the back of the stove to atoms, turned towards him, and, with a ferocious expression, intimated that he had then a great mind to knock his brains out.

George smiled at this threat, and the poker was thrown with due violence beneath the grate; and when this noisy feat had been per-

formed, the worthy knight sank back in his chair in a fit of sulks, to which he had long been accustomed, and which seemed to agree admirably with his fine constitution.

A dead silence ensued, and continued unbroken for hours. George at first wished to explain that the beautiful Julia was still virtuous, still guileless, still pure; but, on reflection, he conceived it to be better for him at present to hold his peace, lest the knight's resolution to have them married at once should be shaken. He therefore still preserved silence. The pacific intimation which had reference as well to the poker as to his brains, kept him awake, while Sir Richard slept, or feigned to sleep, in his easy chair till the morning.

When eight o'clock came, and George found the knight apparently still very heavy, he began to get extremely impatient, and coughed with some violence, and went to the window and withdrew the curtains to let in the light, and made sundry other noises, which eventually had the effect of arousing Sir Richard, who, having looked at his watch, started up, exclaiming,

"Now, sir!—now walk with me."

George bowed, and followed him at once to the door, where Sir Richard took his arm and held it tightly; and thus they proceeded to the Registrar, and thence to the Surrogate, and having procured the licence, called upon the curate of the parish, fixed the hour, and then returned; but not to breakfast—they had no breakfast: the carriage was ordered, and Julia was commanded to prepare, and at the appointed hour she and Jane entered the carriage with Sir Richard and George.

On their way to the church not a syllable was uttered. Poor Julia sobbed convulsively, which seemed to please her father, who acted as if the idea of getting rid of her filled him with delight. Jane, too, was deeply affected; but George preserved his calmness and self-possession, although his Julia's affliction gave him pain.

On arriving at the church, Julia was conducted by Jane to the vestry, followed by Sir Richard and him whom he regarded as his prisoner still; and when the whole of the preliminaries had been arranged, they proceeded to the altar, and the ceremony commenced.

The solemnity with which it was performed would have softened any man possessing the slightest proper feeling, but it had no effect upon Sir Richard. He alone stood unmoved. Nor would he join in the prayers: instead of kneeling, he turned from the altar, and would assuredly have been reprimanded, had not the minister known him to be a heartless wretch. He, however, when the ceremony was completed, returned with them into the vestry, and dashed his name with violence upon the book as a witness of the marriage; while George, who maintained the most perfect self-possession throughout, paid the fees.

Of course both George and Julia expected, that on leaving the church, they should return with Sir Richard, if not indeed to spend a day of happiness with him, at least to pass it in endeavours to effect a reconciliation. On reaching the porch, however, Sir Richard, who pre-

ceded them, made a dead stop, and as Julia looked up to him imploringly, he with an aspect of a goaded savage said,

"Now, madam! Here all connexion between us ends. That is your way, and may it lead to beggary! This is mine, and never from this hour let me see you again. Come to me in rags, and I'll disown you! Come to me in the most squalid wretchedness, for in that state you will come; beg but a morsel of bread when reduced to the very last stage of starvation, and I'll kick you from the door!"

"Papa! dear papa! oh! forgive me!" exclaimed Julia, frantically falling at his feet, and clasping her hands in an attitude of adoration, "I am not the guilty wretch you imagine me to be; indeed, indeed, I am innocent. I swear to you in this sacred place that I am innocent! Pray, pray believe me!"

"Starve, baggage! starve!" exclaimed Sir Richard, as he cast her off with violence.

"Baggage she is not!" cried George, as he raised her, "No other man dare apply that epithet to her!"

"Beggar! I loathe you! I loathe you both! Starve!" When entering the carriage which conveyed them to the church, he drove off, leaving Julia in the arms of George, fainting.

As the minister came up at this moment, he invited them into the vestry, where Julia was restored to a state of consciousness, when a carriage was sent for, and the party proceeded to Mrs. Julian's cottage, where the day was passed by George in lavishing the most affectionate endearments upon his beautiful but almost distracted bride.

CHAPTER III.

GEORGE STARTS HIS FIRST SPECULATION.

HAVING remained a few days at the cottage of his mother, George, finding that all his efforts to propitiate Sir Richard were vain, came to town with his amiable wife. He had but one letter of introduction; but he did not despair: on the contrary, he was sanguine of success, for what was he not prepared to undertake, and if possible to accomplish, with the view of restoring to a position of affluence that gentle devoted creature, to whom he felt more firmly than ever attached. His ambition was to raise her above her former station, to make her more wealthy than her heartless father; and, with this view, he resolved to achieve all of which he was capable, while he had, neither by precept nor by example, been taught to adhere to the strict rules of commercial honour.

On his arrival in London, he therefore called without delay upon the person to whom his introductory letter was addressed; and as it fortunately happened that that gentleman wanted a junior clerk, he, after many inquiries having reference to his general capabilities, engaged him at a salary of one pound per week

This was thought by George, considering all things, to be a respectable beginning, and he returned with a light heart to his Julia, who was delighted, and on the following morning his duties commenced.

The gentleman by whom he had been thus engaged was a stock-broker, having an office in one of the darkest alleys in the vicinity of Cornhill He was a wealthy man, and rather deep in nearly the whole of the important speculations of the day; and as his senior clerk—who was cognisant of the character of every speculation into which his employer entered—explained to George the various modes in which money was raised, and how rapidly fortunes were realized, George was not only astonished, but soon became dissatisfied with his one pound per week, and resolved to start some speculation of his own.

His imagination was rich. He conceived a thousand schemes, which, however, he found to be impracticable, seeing that he had then neither money nor credit to start with. He never felt the want of wealth so keenly; he never knew its value till then. It distressed him beyond measure; but he would not despair. He studied hard, both at the office—having little to do there—and at home; made himself conversant with the basis and bearings of every commercial transaction of importance, and in a short period few indeed more perfectly understood the hollow character of those schemes by which thousands were realized daily.

Still he was prohibited by the mean and hungry nature of his circumstances from entering into any speculation of his own, and for months he continued to draw his pound a week, which, albeit fully conscious of even that being essential to his existence, he received with a feeling of contempt.

At length, however, he was seized with a fit of philanthropy: he resolved to come out as a friend of the poor. It was a most bitter winter; coals were very dear, while the price of provisions of every sort was proportionably unreasonable. He felt deeply for those whom poverty pinched, for he felt most dreadfully pinched himself. Poor Julia, with all her economy, found it difficult indeed to make her allowance hold out, although frequently would she go without dinner herself, that her dear George might have a good tea on his return. This George well knew, notwithstanding she laboured to conceal it, and he also knew that the evil ought, if possible, to be removed.

Accordingly, having arranged all his plans, he gave up his berth, took an office in the city, pledged his clothes to pay for the fixtures—which consisted of a desk, two stools, and a piece of floor-cloth, and advertised at once for six collectors and a cook.

The collectors were to be men of strict probity and honour, whose characters were expected to bear the strictest investigation, and whose ages were to fluctuate between forty and sixty. The cook was to be a man of great experience in his art, one whose character for honesty and zeal would bear scrutiny, and whose practice in the manufacture of soups had been extensive.

Having taken this advertisement, he went to a journeyman painter, upon whom he had for several days previously kept his eye, and agreed

to give him eighteen-pence and a pint of porter, to write boldly upon the door of his office, "THE ROYAL EAST LONDON ASSOCIATION FOR THE SUCCOUR OF THE DESTITUTE POOR."

This, on being accomplished, had a striking effect. George expressed himself pleased with its appearance, and having paid the painter, set to work to write out his prospectus.

This, when completed, was an extremely well-directed appeal to the hearts of the benevolent. It set forth, in terms the most touching, the dreadful privations which the indigent classes of society were at that inclement season compelled to endure; and after dwelling with unexampled eloquence upon the beauty of charity, and upon that being peculiarly the period for its exercise, concluded by intimating that donations would be received by the agents of the Association, whose immediate object was to supply really destitute families with soup.

On the following day, in consequence of the advertisement, George had an immense number of personal applications. He was perfectly astonished to find so many respectable elderly men anxious to be employed. He also received a great number of letters, but these were unnoticed; he selected from his personal applicants six of the most venerable individuals, the whole of whom gave most respectable references, and who were directed to call early the next morning. This delay was endured, of course, solely to show that the Association, of which George was Hon. Sec., *pro tem.*, were, as regarded the reputation of their agents, sufficiently particular. The Association had neither time nor inclination to call upon the parties to whom the candidates referred; nevertheless, when those candidates attended at the appointed hour in the morning, George, in the name of the Association, expressed himself perfectly satisfied, and having formally engaged them, despatched them without any further delay, with copies of the Association's powerful prospectus, duly printed in fine large type, to suit the eyes, more especially of the aged.

He also concluded an engagement with a cook, a fine, corpulent, classical-nosed, duly accomplished Frenchman—whose salary was fixed at three guineas per week and the bones.

Having thus done all he could do to secure a fair start, he awaited the arrival of the hour of six with the utmost impatience. At that auspicious hour, his agents had engaged to return, and in them all his hopes of success were centred. His suspense was painful: still he was sanguine: he would not allow himself to think even of failure, but walked round the eastern extremities of the metropolis with the view of fixing upon the most eligible neighbourhood for the actual distribution of the Association's soup.

While he was thus engaged, his agents were most zealous. Their commission—being twenty-five per cent upon all they collected—stimulated them to exertions almost beyond their strength, for they were getting rather old, and their stomachs had not for some time been overloaded. They, notwithstanding, managed to keep up: they waited at first only upon those whose benevolence had long been conspicuous; and the result was, that on their return to the office it was found that the

net produce of their exertions during the day amounted to upwards of two hundred pounds.

To explain how delighted George was with this result, were supererogatory; it will be perhaps now quite sufficient to state that neither he nor Julia retired supperless that night.

He was nevertheless up before daybreak in the morning, and so were his agents, who were equally delighted with himself, and who in consequence of the profits of the previous day, renewed their exertions with increased zeal.

In the course of the morning, George hired a house in the vicinity of Hoxton; and having purchased a board of extraordinary dimensions, which he directed to be put up, and handsomely repainted with all possible expedition, he sent for Junot the cook, whom he accompanied, with the view of purchasing coppers and other culinary utensils, in order that the legitimate business of the Association might commence without delay.

All this was achieved with amazing despatch; and, as the agents that day had been equally successful, before twelve o'clock on the following morning, bullocks' heads and shins of beef were at a premium. George accompanied by Junot—for Junot possessed a good nose and sound judgment—bought them all up: for miles round nothing in the shape of a shin of beef was to be had; and as Junot and a couple of scullery maids, whom he drove about dreadfully, were hard at work throughout the night, the next day at noon the soup was ready for distribution.

And excellent soup it was Junot prided himself upon it, and George when he tasted it never enjoyed anything more in his life.

Long before the hour appointed for its distribution, groups of miserable, emaciated, half-naked creatures assembled and stood shivering on the verge of starvation in the yard. Some had kettles, some saucepans, some jugs, and some pails, while their haggard looks proclaimed that hope had but just brightened up despair.

And when the hour came, their eager haste to be supplied was distressing. It was tasted by all the very instant it was obtained, and appeared to be by all much approved; but while some drank it off with avidity on the spot, others hastened away with their vessels well filled to divide it with those who were perishing at home.

This of course cut up the alamode business completely: it was all round the neighbourhood at an absolute stand-still; for Junot, who entered into the spirit of the thing, continued to ladle out his savoury decoction until his coppers were perfectly empty, which occupied nearly three hours.

At the expiration of that period Junot shut up shop and went to bed, being, as he himself declared, "fatigue mosh, as the pepel came two tree times ovare;" but George leaving the premises in the care of a substantial looking person whom he had engaged to see that nobody was served twice—went to the office to receive the subscriptions from his agents, who continued to be very successful.

Upon the most munificent of the donors, George in due time called in his character of Hon. Sec., to solicit permission to publish their

names as patrons of the institution; and as he convinced those who imagined that acts of benevolence ought to be concealed, that the publication of their example would prompt emulation, he succeeded in obtaining a long list of patrons who benevolently increased their donations, in order that in the eye of the public their names might stand well.

Having studied human nature rather deeply, George advertised these names in every paper of importance; and those advertisements had the effect of inducing many other benevolent persons to subscribe, with motives which probably could not be attributable to the spirit of benevolence alone. Their names, notwithstanding, appeared. George kept faith with all. He received the subscriptions of the rich and supplied the poor daily with excellent soup, and at the end of the season, which lasted three months, found a balance in his favour of one thousand pounds.

CHAPTER IV.

GEORGE'S SCHEME FOR TRANSMUTING QUICKSILVER INTO GOLD.

BEING now in a position to speculate with effect, George directed his attention to various schemes, with a view to the rapid realization of a fortune. He felt perfectly sure that this was practicable, and had no apprehension that the sum he had made by starting the Soup Association—by which, he contended, he had injured no one, while he had benefited thousands—would be the germ of fruit that would approach perfection only to be blasted.

At this important period of our history it happened that the existence of various South American mining speculations created a mania in the public mind of a character so stubborn, that although the wild schemes were denounced by men of the most extensive experience, and highest standing in the commercial world, as well as by the most important portion of the public press, that mania could not be subdued.

South America was at that particular time in a state of open rebellion; and it was of course the object and the policy of Spain to throw every possible obstacle in the way of the achievement of the independence of the revolted provinces.

Now, of course, George knew all about this, and he at the same time strongly inclined to the belief, that he was able to make this lamentable state of things highly advantageous to himself.

He therefore watched with an eagle's eye the progress of events. He suffered nothing to escape him. He ascertained that quicksilver was essential to the separation of the precious metal from the ore in the process of amalgamation: he ascertained that this highly important article had been for some time previously neglected; that there was then comparatively a very small quantity of it in the United Kingdom;

that it was principally in bond, and held by a few individuals; that nearly the whole of the supply was imported from Cadiz, and that it came from the mines of Almadon, in the province of La Mancha, which mines were the property of the crown: and having ascertained all this, George saw his way clearly.

His first object now was to obtain an interview with the Spanish ambassador, and in this he succeeded without much delay, when he submitted to his Excellency whether, in the event of the exportation of quicksilver from the port of Cadiz being strictly prohibited, it would not tend to check those speculations from which the rebellious provinces were deriving so much advantage.

The hint was taken in an instant. The effect was seen at a glance. His Excellency thanked him—heartily thanked him—as a friend of old Spain, and George left with the feelings of a man fully conscious of having gained a grand point, although he cared in reality no more for old Spain than he did for the rebels themselves.

This point having thus been accomplished, George waited not for the news of the prohibition to arrive in England, because he knew what effect it would have in the market; but feeling quite certain that the prohibition *would* be proclaimed and enforced, he made himself acquainted with the names of all the holders of quicksilver in the country, and just before—according to his calculation—the news ought to have arrived, he cautiously sent brokers into the market, with a commission to purchase at fourteen days prompt, and thus became the secret holder of all the quicksilver in the kingdom.

He then panted for the arrival of this glorious news. Day after day passed, and yet it did not come. Had he possessed sufficient means to pay for all he had purchased, at the expiration of the fourteen days, it would have been of slight importance, the holders being under contract to deliver; but he had not at his command a twentieth part of the sum required, and he could not endure the thought of selling it within the fourteen days, at the paltry profit, perhaps, of ten or fifteen per cent.

Still the news would not arrive! The time had more than half expired, and no syllable on the subject had been breathed.

At length, beginning to despair of full success, he resolved upon a plan by which he might secure two thirds, or at least, half the profits of the speculation; and, in pursuance of this resolution, he went at once to Bull, his old employer; and having explained to him candidly and fairly the position in which he stood, offered him a third of the profits of the transaction, if he would but have in readiness a sum sufficient to complete the purchase at the expiration of the fourteen days, in the event of the news not arriving.

Bull was delighted with the project, and rubbed his hands gleefully as the points were explained, and applauded George highly; when, after consulting with Jones, his chief clerk, by whose opinion he was invariably guided, and who had ten per cent. of the produce of all hits, he agreed to have in readiness whatever sum might be required; but he wanted half the profits. Oh! he couldn't think for a moment of having less than a fair half.

Well; George, having then no other alternative, consented to let him have half, while Jones was to have his per-centage upon the whole.

"But," said Bull, who continued to rub his hands in a state of ecstacy, "whatever you *do*, my dear fellow, for Heaven's sake, don't make a mess of it now."

"Leave that to me," said George.

"Stick to it, my dear boy, stick to it. Get the earliest information. But," he added, after a pause, "how is that to be got?"

"I'll get it," said George; "do not fear."

"But how are you to know before any one else?"

"That of course will be impossible; all I undertake to do is, to obtain the information before it reaches the market."

"That's the point! that's the point! But how is it to be done?"

"It shall be done," said George, "if you'll leave me to manage it."

"My dear boy! I have the utmost confidence in you. I leave the management in your hands entirely. I would not interfere with your arrangements for the world. I'll stake my life upon our success. We cannot fail, because I know that you *can* obtain the first information; but the question with me is simply, *how* are you to do it?"

George smiled, and proposed that they should go to the west-end; a proposition which was immediately acceeded to by Bull, and they started. It was then nearly eleven, and as George was determined to ascertain, if possible, whether the Spanish government had acted, or intended to act upon his suggestion, they entered the first coach they came to, and were driven to the residence of the ambassador.

On the way, George, wishing to conceal nothing from Bull, then explained the object of his visit, and suggested, that while he was with the ambassador, Bull should remain in the coach, in order that, if any information were obtained, they might be driven back at once.

Accordingly, on their arrival at the house, George alighted alone, and having learned that the ambassador was within, sent up his card, and in a short time was ushered in due form into his Excellency's presence.

The ambassador received him with great cordiality; he was indeed excessively polite, and seemed much pleased to see him; for having taken the credit of the suggestion to himself, he had that very morning received from his government compliments which had raised his spirits to the highest pitch of ecstacy.

"I have to apologise," said George, "for having thus again presumed to intrude upon your Excellency's valuable time, but—"

"Pardon me, sare," said his Excellency, bowing most profoundly; "I most beg, no appollosha. I will be too happy for any sogestion you will have to make to me."

"I am sorry," said George, "that I should have been so unfortunate as to have my former suggestion deemed unworthy of being acted upon by the Spanish government."

"Ma tear sare," cried his Excellency, "it was no sosh thing! It is acted upon! I receive an extraordinare *dis*patch this morning! The port is close fast, ma tear sir! The quicksilvare was prohibit at vonce!"

"I beg your Excellency's pardon," said George, rising on the instant. "I, of course, was not aware of that fact; if I had been, I certainly should not have troubled your Excellency again."

"Ma tear sare," said his Excellency, staring as if he really didn't exactly understand this sudden desire on the part of George to go; "it is, pelieve a me, no trobel!—bot you have som othare sogestion to make to me—eh?"

"No," replied George; "I took the liberty of waiting upon your Excellency, simply to ascertain whether that which I suggested had been adopted or spurned."

"Sparn, ma tear sare! no sosh thing! It gave vary mosh delight! Bot, ma tear sare!—you will not go zhist yet, directly! I will like to have some littel conversation with you!"

"Your Excellency will pardon me," said George, who had no wish whatever to remain. "I am rather in haste: I called but for a moment."

"Wale; bot what in your jodgment will be the effect upon the rebels?" said his Excellency, anxious to bring George back to his seat.

"Precisely," replied George, pretending to misunderstand him, and bowing with grace while approaching the door; "I agree with you perfectly. It must have that effect. I have the honour to wish your Excellency good morning."

It was manifest that his Excellency did not much *like* this; however, he continued to be extremely polite, and bowed with striking profundity.

"All right," cried George, on re-entering the coach in which Bull sat in a state of suspense, the most painful. "Drive," he added, addressing the coachman, "like lightning to the Strand!—The great news," he continued, "has arrived—just arrived. The prohibition is enforced—not another pound will be allowed to be exported."

"Well, my dear fellow?—Yes?—Well?" cried Bull with almost breathless impatience.

"Well; go at once down to the city; commission at least half-a-dozen brokers to go openly into the market and to buy up quicksilver immediately at *any price*, while I am doing that which will give strength and colour to the sudden demand; and I'll meet you at the office at three.

"But do we want more?" inquired Bull.

"More! There's no more to be had. I am the holder of it all, don't you see? Let them try their hearts out, they cannot purchase a pound."

"Aye! Then this is to create a demand?"

"Why, of course."

"Excellent! Excellent! Nothing could be better! Your are a clever fellow, Julian, a clever fellow. Jove! what a price it will be?"

"Now you understand perfectly," said George, pulling the check-string. "I get out here. Let them buy all they can—no limit as to price!"

"I see, I see!" said Bull, in a state of rapture. "I see my dear fellow, I see."

George alighted, and as the coach drove off with all possible speed towards the city, he walked calmly into the office of an evening paper, which had been foremost in exposing and denouncing the speculative folly of the age.

"Can I see the editor?" inquired George of the person in attendance.

"He is very much engaged," was the reply.

"Of course he must be, I am aware, at this hour; but will you do me the favour to tell him that I have something of the highest importance to communicate?"

"What name shall I say?"

George handed him his card, and the person proceeded to the sanctum.

At that period, editors of newspapers were almost invariably inaccessible to strangers, not only because they amazingly disliked being put out of their way, but because there were then many persons in the metropolis to whom the process of silencing an editor, engaged in the exposition of bubble speculations, would have imparted no pain.

The gentleman, however, connected with this particular paper, consented to see George, who was accordingly admitted.

"You have, I believe," said George, "constantly and strenuously endeavoured to caution the public against the folly of entering into these miserable bubbles, these South American mining speculations?"

"We have," replied the editor, solemnly and distantly.

"It is with reference to that praiseworthy object that I have taken the liberty of calling upon you now. You are aware that in obtaining the pure gold, the use of quicksilver is absolutely necessary; you are also aware, that whatever the value of these mines may be, that value would be sensibly diminished if no quicksilver were to be had; but you are not aware—I feel convinced that you are not, or you would have exposed it before now in your public-spirited journal—that there is at this time an attempt being made to monopolise secretly the whole of the quicksilver in the kingdom."

"I certainly was not aware of that," returned the editor; "but if it be so, I cannot perceive that it will be of any very great permanent importance, inasmuch as the supply is quite certain to be at least equal to the demand."

"Not," rejoined George, "if the supply be prohibited."

"I grant you! But *is* it prohibited?"

"It is."

"Bless my life and soul!" exclaimed the editor, seizing the morning journals. "It is strange that I should have heard nothing of it. There is nothing at all about it in any of the papers."

"There is nothing about it in the papers of this morning; but the papers of to-morrow will be full of it."

"Bless my life and soul! it's very strange, it is indeed very strange,

that I should have received no information on the subject; but are you sure?"

"Quite sure."

"I shouldn't wonder: I shouldn't be surprised; I shouldn't at all be astonished. I perceive its effect, Very likely. Dear me!--why the shares—sir! this will burst the bubble."

"I imagined," said George, "that you, having exerted yourself so laudably, with the view of cnecking these ruinous speculations, would like to have the earliest information on the subject, and therefore—"

"I thank you, I feel extremely obliged. It shall certainly be noticed, sir. In the present commercial crisis it is of the deepest importance. Of course I may depend upon the authenticity of this information?"

"You have the means at your command," replied George, "of ascertaining beyond all doubt. If you send to the Spanish ambassador you will find that the port of Cadiz is closed to the exportation of quicksilver: if you send into the city you will find the brokers most eager to buy quicksilver up at any price."

"I am perfectly satisfied. I perceive the whole bearings of the question. Is this known to many, may I ask?"

"The prohibition is at present known but to three persons in England besides yourself."

"And I presume you have no intention of imparting the information to any other evening paper?"

"Most certainly not. No;" added George, cavalierly, "I thought it a thing which ought at once to be noticed, that the public might be put on their guard as soon as possible. I therefore just called in, although of course the morning papers will have it."

"No doubt. I feel exceedingly obliged by your calling. It is, as you observe, highly important that it should be noticed as early as possible. I'll take care that the public *are* put upon their guard. You have my thanks."

George then took his leave; and while he was hastening into the city, the editor, delighted with the opportunity of beating the whole of his evening contemporaries, set to work and wrote a powerful leading article, wherein he spake of the proverbial priority of his intelligence, gave extracts from sundry slashing articles which had previously appeared in his paper, with the view of proving to demonstration the surpassing correctness and full realization of his predictions; dwelt at large, and with eloquence and strength, upon the palpably unprecedented knowledge he possessed of human nature in general, and South American mining speculations in particular; illustrated divers abstruse propositions, by bringing to bear heavily upon his points certain singularly interesting geological phenomena, and after walking rather deeply into the science of mineralogy, and showing precisely how the balance of gratitude stood between him and the nation, he denounced with unparalleled power the supineness of his contemporaries in the aggregate, and wound up brilliantly by giving the information imparted by George.

The effect of this excoriating article, appearing as it did simultaneously with the sudden demand for quicksilver, was electric. The price immediately rose a hundred per cent ; but buyers only were to be heard of!—not a seller could be met with in the market! — which was deemed most extraordinary. Where was all the quicksilver? Who were the holders? No one could tell, for George had taken the precaution to commission his brokers to purchase in small quantities, in order that no suspicion might be created. Never was there anything so palpable, to the view of those who were anxious to monopolize the article, as the existence of a monopoly. But who were the monopolists?—the holders of Spanish bonds?—the loan contractors?—the directors of the mining speculations? — the rebels themselves? All in turn were suspected: all in turn were emphatically declared to be the monopolists. Scores of strictly honourable men, who were positively shocked at the idea of so monstrous a monopoly, and who were therefore extremely eager to secure it themselves, most loudly denounced those who had it. They would have bought it all up at an advance of two hundred per cent. with great pleasure, but being utterly unable to do this, it was dreadful. They were even prepared—so comprehensive was their philanthropy, and so purely patriotic their spirit—to purchase the whole at an advance of *three* hundred per cent., and to hold it until it reached five or six hundred; but as the monopolists held it themselves, of course in the judgment of these patriots, their conduct was gross.

It is amazing how nice and fine the honour of an experienced commercial man is, while others are doing that which he cannot do himself. A *sub-rosâ* transaction of profit, in which he is not concerned, cuts his principles to the quick: as an honest man he must expose it; as an enemy to fraud he must denounce it; as a friend to virtue he must, if possible, thwart it; as a sound and useful member of society, he must hold it up to universal scorn.

In this particular instance, the complaints of the immaculate persons on 'Change were heart-rending; and while the bosoms of some swelled with the fraught of virtuous indignation, others silently established their hands in their pockets, and seemed half gnawed away by the morbid worms engendered by mental distress. They could hardly endure it. There was the price going up almost hourly without being of the slightest advantage to them. It was touching. Why were they not in it? Why in the whole course of their experience did they never think of quicksilver before? That was the grand point: it was that which hurt their feelings, and they really were affected very deeply.

And so indeed was Bull. While standing he was constantly rubbing his hands, and as constantly, while sitting, was he rubbing his knees: he polished up his trousers to such an extent, that they shone with as much lustre as if they had been glazed. He was quite in a fever. He felt very nervous. He couldn't write, and wouldn't talk lest anything should drop. During the day he would scarcely suffer George to be absent from him for a moment. He called for him in the morning, went with him on 'Change, dined with him in the city, and walked

home with him at night, although he himself resided at Stamford Hill, while his dear friend lived near the Elephant-and-Castle.

During the whole of this time George was perfectly tranquil: he astonished both Bull and Jones, he was so very calm. He watched the progress of the speculation unceasingly, and if any report arose which in his judgment tended to any point save that of success, he would instantly check it.

When the price had been raised four hundred per cent he thought it high time to think about selling. But Bull would not hear of it:—he had the highest respect for the judgment of George, and protested that he would not oppose him for the world; but he thought that to sell then would be such a pity.

George therefore consented to wait another day, and the price then rose to five hundred per cent.

"You see," cried Bull, smiling with rapture, "you see, my dear boy, I was right!"

"Well; now let us sell."

"No, no, no, no; not to-day, my dear boy; not to-day! Say to-morrow. There! only let us wait until to-morrow, and then we'll sell at whatever price it happens to be."

"We shall play with this thing until we lose it."

"Lose it! my dearest friend, how can we lose it?"

"I am disposed," said George, "to trust to the chapter of accidents no longer."

"Accident! Impossible! What accident can occur? Besides, look you, it's sure to be higher to-morrow! Why throw a chance away?"

"Why not secure the chance we have? We shall now make a hundred thousand pounds by the transaction."

"No, not a hundred thousand: not quite a hundred thousand. You forget the ten per cent. Ten per cent. is too much. Jones ought to be satisfied with five, or two and a half—eh?—it is not compulsory?"

"He shall have ten per cent. upon mine."

"Ten is a great deal too much: now I think five, you know, would be nothing but fair! What do *you* think?"

"That we ought to keep faith with him, certainly."

"Very true:—but consider the amount! You forget that ten per cent. will be ten thousand pounds! And what does a fellow like that want with ten thousand pounds? Why, he'll be so independent I shall never be able to get him to come to business before twelve o'clock in the day! He'd lie in bed till the sun scorched his eyes out, he would. No, I think that five would be very fair; I do, indeed; and he ought to think himself monstrous lucky to get that, he ought."

"I shall oppose," said George, "any diminution. Let us do what we may, we should always keep faith with those with whom we are connected."

"Well, then, I'll tell you what we'll do: we'll just make this ten per cent. extra, in order that we may have our fifty thousand a-piece clear."

"Be guided by me," said George; "let us sell at once."

"Nay, nay, let us cover the drawback! Oh! do let us cover the drawback! It'll be like throwing ten thousand pounds into the gutter! It is sure to be that at least in the morning. Say the morning;—oh! come, say the morning."

"If I do, and I shall do so unwillingly, I'll not consent to wait another hour."

"I'll not ask you, my friend, I'll not ask you. Upon my honour I'll not, if you'll only wait till then."

When the honour of Bull had been pledged, why George at once of course consented; and having done all that was necessary to ensure an early sale, went home in the highest spirits.

"Julia, my love," said he, when they had been sitting for some time in silence, for Julia never interrupted the current of his thoughts, but sat watching the various changes of his countenance, happy if *he* looked happy, and very sad if he betrayed sadness. "Julia, my love, to-morrow will be to me a glorious day!"

"Dear George, I am overjoyed to hear it!"

"To-morrow, my girl, I shall have made a splendid fortune."

"You delight me," said Julia, who flew to him, and kissed him, and threw her arms fondly round his neck, as he pressed her to his heart.

"Why," he continued, "I shall be worth, my girl, fifty thousand pounds!"

"Fifty thousand pounds, dear!"

"Fifty thousand!—what think you of that?"

"I am glad: I am too full of gladness!—papa will be also glad."

"I fear not," said George.

"Oh, yes, dear; I know he will: he must be. And then he'll receive us."

"Not he. *He* would be delighted only to see his predictions fulfilled."

"His predictions!—What were they, dear?"

"It's unimportant," returned George, who had no desire to wound her feelings. "Think, my love, of the brilliant position we shall be in! I would not name it to you before, it being possible that you might have experienced disappointment, but all is secure now."

"Dear George, I could have borne disappointment! I am happy—you know that I shall ever be happy in any state with you. But papa, dear: will he not receive us when he knows that we are rich?"

"We shall see," replied George, not wishing to pursue the subject farther. "Time will show."

"Oh, but I feel quite sure that he will, and then we shall be all *so* happy together!"

George kissed her, for he did love her fondly, and in order that the subject might not be pursued, he proposed that she should read to him, a proposition to which she acceeded on the instant with pleasure.

Now, while they were thus engaged, Jones, who never had been a very abstemious man, was smoking his pipe at a celebrated tavern in the vicinity of Cornhill, to which a number of brokers and

others nightly resorted. Jones, who perfectly well knew the state of the markets, of course calculated upon being in the morning ten thousand pounds richer than he was then; and while engaged in the inspiring process of conceiving the details of the course he proposed to pursue in his new position, he smoked so fast and sipped so deeply, that long before his usual time for starting, his customary quantity was gone. He was somewhat amazed at this for the moment, but being in excellent spirits, he ordered another glass which, strange to say, went more quickly than the last. He seemed to enjoy it much more than he had ever done previously: he could not tell exactly how it was; but the ideas induced by his brilliant position imparted a *zest* to the grog. It was somehow beautiful; and he had another glass. This was still more delicious—which was very extraordinary, and he sipped and sipped, and smacked his lips, and praised it, and began to chat a little to those around, which for him was more extraordinary still: it was in fact his *début*, for although he had been in the habit of attending the same room for years, he had never before joined in the general conversation.

Now it happened that immediately around him sat certain drug-brokers, shrewd wily individuals, who seldom indeed impart any secret themselves, but who open their ears widely whenever any thing bearing the semblance of a secret is about to be imparted. These persons had been talking about the unprecedented rise in the price of quicksilver among themselves; for they were all deeply interested in the matter, seeing that they had all been commissioned to purchase; and noticing certain mysterious observations, having reference to the subject, which inadvertently fell from Jones, resolved, if possible, to bring him out; shrewdly conceiving that he knew more, much more, than at any other time they could induce him to unfold.

They accordingly became very ardent in their friendship; listened attentively to every thing he said, and laughed loudly at every ghost of a joke he attempted to utter. One of them had known him for a great number of years, and had always respected him highly; another rose to propose his health, and thus entailed upon him the necessity of acknowledging the honour; while a third proposed to have, with the view of cementing their friendship, a bowl of punch at parting. Jones offered not the slightest opposition: he met their views precisely, and declared that he had not the least objection then to any thing in life.

Having, by virtue of these delicate attentions succeeded in raising the self-esteem of Jones to an extremely high pitch, they reverted to the extraordinary state of the quicksilver-market; but with infinite caution, and without appearing to imagine that Jones knew anything about it at all.

One indulged in a series of the most absurd conjectures having reference to the cause of the sudden rise in price: the whole of which were heartily laughed at by Jones; another pretended to be intimately acquainted with the whole of the monopolists, and named them; which was pointedly pronounced to be too good by Jones; a third—feeling convinced by the confident spirit which characterized

the prompt observations of Jones, declared that they who were at the bottom of it were extremely clever fellows, let them be whomsoever they might.

"Do you think so?" said Jones, with a peculiarly self-satisfied smile.

"Do I think so? There never was a thing better managed in this world! It has been carried on admirably from the commencement. I don't care who they are, but I will say this without fear of contradiction, that whoever they may be, or wherever they may come from, they are decidedly the cleverest fellows in Europe."

"There is but one," observed Jones, still complacently smiling.

"But one! Then I don't know what to call him The term 'clever' is too poor and mean to apply to such a man. What *must* be his general character! Of course you are acquainted with him?"

"I am," replied Jones.

"I am at a loss to conceive what sort of man he can be! I'd give the world to know him."

"You have seen him," said Jones.

"Is it possible!" exclaimed the broker. "Is it—can it be possible. Do I know him? Has he ever been here?"

"He is invariably here, when I am."

"Dear me, you amaze me! In what part of the room does he usually sit?"

"He sits always where I sit," said Jones; when, leaning back pompously in his chair, he added, "I am the man!"

"You astonish me, perfectly astonish me!"

"You would be," said Jones, with drunken satisfaction, for then he was very far gone—"you would be more astonished still, if I were to explain to you how it was accomplished."

"Aye! that indeed would be a treat," returned the broker; "nothing on earth could give me greater delight than that."

"Well, you know," said Jones, "it must be in the strictest possible confidence?"

"Of course! of course!" they all exclaimed. "We are friends!"

Jones then drank another glass of punch, and, taking to himself the entire credit of the transaction, absolutely exposed the whole affair from first to last!

The brokers, having learned all they desired to learn, suddenly took leave of Jones and retired. They felt piqued, for they with others had been made perfect tools of, and therefore in the morning they caused the whole scheme to fly like wildfire through the city, and the consequence was that sellers not only refused to deliver, but threatened proceedings against all concerned!

Thus a scheme, by which a hundred thousand pounds, at the very least, would have been made, was in one hour of drunken vanity destroyed; but although Jones, in consequence, entertained thoughts on the subject of suicide, and Bull was for some time confined to his bed, the failure had no other effect upon George than that of raising his ambition, and of laying the bases of those extensive schemes which he subsequently conceived and carried into execution.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH GEORGE IS INTRODUCED TO VARIOUS FRIENDS OF A PECULIAR CHARACTER.

When Bull had sufficiently recovered from the shock so suddenly induced by his clerk's gross and glaring indiscretion, he repaired to the office, accompanied by George, with the view of having the culprit before him

As they entered, poor Jones became in an instant almost a dead man; the very sight of them threw him into a state of perspiration the most free and unpleasant, while he trembled with sufficient violence to render loose and lively every joint of the stool upon which he sat. He experienced then the feelings of a culprit indeed: nay, had he that moment been about to be hanged, it is questionable whether he could have felt worse. Bull looked at him severely—ferociously! He, however, said nothing, but passed through the office into his own private room, with the aspect of a man conscious of having made up his mind to do something.

But here he became nearly as tremulous as Jones! He could not prevail upon his knees to be tranquil,—they would knock together; and as his heart beat in spite of him audibly, he looked like a dead individual galvanized, seeing that while he was as pale as a ghost, his arms, legs—nay, every muscle, appeared to be influenced by one universal convulsion.

"Be calm," said George: "you will make yourself ill again. Come, come, sit down, and be cool."

"I am in such a passion, I am," cried Bull. "I don't know what to do with myself, my dear boy. The sight of that fellow has driven me *mad*, it has! Never, never will I trust him again."

"Well, well, tell him so calmly. Shall I call him in? There—now be composed.—Mr. Jones," he added, on opening the door, "step this way."

Jones turned upon his stool, and presented one of the most wretched countenances ever beheld. His appearance altogether was particularly miserable: he looked, in consequence, ten years older at least; but, albeit his heart sank within him, he managed to crawl to the door.

"Come in, sir!" cried Bull. "Now then, sir, don't you *think* you're a very pretty fellow?"

Jones did not say whether he did or not, but it was at that moment abundantly manifest, that if he did he flattered himself most grossly.

"What have you to say, sir, to this—this—treacherous conduct? What—what have you to *say?*"

Jones really had nothing to say, and said nothing.

"Are you not ashamed, sir, to look me in the face?"

This question was altogether supererogatory. Jones made no attempt at all to look him in the face; he stood trembling with his hands

thrust to the bottom of his trousers-pockets, and looking as straight down his nose as he possibly could look. The question, therefore, charged him by implication with an offence of which he was by no means guilty.

"You have been in my employ," continued Bull, who had it all his own way, "for the last fifteen years; for fifteen years, sir, you have had my confidence, you have; and you know it: but after *this* week your services will not be required. A drunkard!—a man that goes out and gets drunk!—a fellow that drinks till he's intoxicated!—a fool that swills away till he can't see!—a sot that loses all reason and sense! Can there be a worse character?—I could do you a mischief, I could!" he added, clenching his fist fiercely, as if about to exhibit his pugilistic prowess. "I could break every bone in your skin, I could. What did you get for betraying us? Who bought you up?"

Jones, who had been silent and passive before, now drew his hands out of his pockets, and spoke.

"Do you think that I sold myself?" said he.

"Silence!" said Bull, who perceived that he had been carried a little too far.

"But I will not be silent! call me a fool, a sot, a drunkard, any thing you please but a villain, and I'll bear it, but I cannot bear that. No! I am *not* a villain!"

"No, no, no," interrupted George; "I ascribe the betrayal of confidence to folly alone. I will go no farther than that."

"Mr. Julian, sir," said Jones, "I deserve to be kicked from Temple-bar to Aldgate-pump; I could hit my own head off, sir,—cut my own throat,—do any thing,—I am so mad with myself; but I am *but* a fool, sir, nothing worse than that."

"You are a scoundrel, sir!" cried Bull; "for what is it but scoundrelism to rob men of a hundred thousand pounds?"

"Come, come," said George, soothingly. "It is useless to employ harsh terms. I don't believe that Jones would rob any man of a shilling. He has been guilty of an act of folly,—I must say an act of monstrous folly; but here let it rest: he will remember till the day of his death that it cost *him* ten thousand pounds, and by the constant recollection of that, I imagine, he will be quite sufficiently punished."

Jones shook his head mournfully, and thrust his hands again into his pockets.

"It is a bad job," continued George, "a very bad job; but it cannot be helped: we had better say no more about it."

"But I'll not have him here," cried Bull. "What confidence can I have in a fellow like that? Leave the room, sir!—I hate the very sight of you, I do!"

Jones obeyed, and when he had done so, Bull became more calm; and having explained to George again and again, that he should always be happy to place at his command whatever money he might require for speculative purposes, they parted.

On the following day Bull called upon George, accompanied by a Mr. Augustus Alexander Cavendish, an extremely plump and pompous

little person, who, having heard of George's quicksilver project, had expressed himself anxious to obtain an introduction.

"Mr. Cavendish," said Bull, presenting him, "a friend of mine."

"I am proud, sir, to know you, Mr. Julian," said Cavendish, grasping George's hand and shaking it warmly. "It is one of the most pleasurable pleasures I ever experienced. It is worth, sir, any pecuniary money to be introduced to a kindred spirit, a man of genius and comprehensive intellect. I have heard of you, sir, from our mutual friend Bull, and all I can say is that I am proud, sir, to know you."

George bowed, and felt flattered of course; but he could not exactly understand why this gentleman should on so short a notice be so desperately affectionate. He was not, however, allowed to think much about it then, for Mr. Cavendish immediately resumed:—

"My friend Bull and I, sir, have entered into many commercial transactions of a mercantile nature, and we have flattered ourselves—eh, haven't we, Bull?—that some of them were *rather* ingenious; but I have no hesitation in saying, Mr. Julian, that you have beaten us all into fits. Don't tell me that a thing isn't good because it fails through the foolish folly of a fool. I'll not hear it! The ingenious ingenuity of the thing is what I look at; that's the point, whether it be carried or not. Mr. Julian! you must do me the honour to dine with me; name your own day. I shall have two or three choice spirits to meet you. You and I must be better acquainted, Mr. Julian! We shall be able to do something mutually together which will be a highly advantageous benefit to both. We'll astonish the world, sir! We *can* do it, eh? You and I are the only *men*, sir! But when will you come? Say to-morrow, and our old friend here will come with you."

"No, you must excuse *me*," said Bull, "I can't stand it; I haven't got over that business yet, I haven't."

"Sir," cried Mr. Cavendish, "that—what's his name?—Jones—that Jones ought to be smothered. He's ten times worse than a felonious felon. Transportation's too good for him. He isn't fit to live upon the face of the earth. However, *you'll* do me the honour, Mr. Julian: will to-morrow be convenient?"

"Perfectly so."

"Then be it to-morrow at six. Allow me to present you with one of my cards. You had better join us, Bull?"

"No, no, I dare not. I feel that I'm not getting younger, I do."

"Well then, I suppose I mustn't press you; only I conceive an idea that you'll do yourself more good by dining off a capital good dinner, than by physicking your inside with physic. However, if you'll not, it's decidedly decided. Mr. Julian," he added, again taking George by the hand, "adieu. Allow me once more to express the pleasure our friend's introduction has afforded. — Are you going my way, Bull?"

"No," replied Bull, "I am going the other."

"Which other?"

"Eastward."

"Well, that is my way; come along.—Adieu, Mr. Julian! Ta, ta."

They then left together, which George much regretted, being anxious to ascertain who and what his tautological friend was. He was not, however, long in suspense, for Bull, having inspired a notion which never struck him before, that a very close intimacy between George and Cavendish would in all probability be somewhat prejudicial to his own private interest, soon returned with the ostensible view of putting George on his guard.

"I'd advise you to be cautious," said he, "of that Cavendish. He's a very specious fellow, he is. If you happen to have any transactions together, deal with him exactly as you would with a rogue."

"Indeed! You introduced him to me as your friend!"

"So I did. In a commercial point of view, every one is a *friend* whom a man can get any thing out of. But, my boy, there are dangerous friends, there are, let me tell you."

"But if he be dangerous, why introduce him?"

"Oh, I don't mean to say that there's any thing wrong about *him*. I always speak as I find; and I must say, that in all our dealings together I have found him upright and downstraight. But he has made a mint of money, he has, and rapidly, and nobody knows how; we only know it hasn't been made in the regular way."

"In the *regular* way! The instances in which men have made rapid fortunes in the regular way, are not, I apprehend, very numerous."

"No, no; but what I look at is this: it was but the other day that he hadn't a pound in his pocket, and now he drives his carriage-and-four."

"Well! it was but the other day that I hadn't a pound; and yet, had our speculation succeeded, why—I might have driven a carriage-and-four."

"Yes, but that's another thing! You have had a superior education, you have; he never had any education at all; he never went to school in his life; he can't write his own name, he can't, legibly!"

"Well; I see nothing extraordinary in that. In this country the most illiterate men make the largest fortunes."

"So they do—so they do; but then I hear that he has very queer associates. However, I mention these things, you know, merely in order to put you on your guard."

"Very proper," said George, who saw the motive with great distinctness,—"very correct and very friendly."

"Why, I knew that fellow—a little grub, sir, whose only occupation was that of carrying a pan of sheep's heads to the baker's, when his father kept a tripe-shop in the Minories, and his mother used to cater for the cats; and yet now only look at him! he lives like a prince: and I'll venture to say that the jewellery he has about him—his watch, rings, eyeglass, brooches, and chains—didn't cost less than five hundred pounds."

"Well, I shouldn't be surprised: but some people, you know, are remarkably fortunate."

Fortunate, sir! Fortune smiles so mysteriously upon them, she does: that puzzles the world. But you will see, and judge for yourself, you will; only be cautious."

George thanked him for his advice, and promised to keep his eyes open; and when Bull had again with great energy denounced the diabolical treachery of Jones, he left, expressly with the view of telling that wretched individual exactly what he thought of him then.

At the appointed hour the next day, George proceeded to keep his engagement with Cavendish, and on arriving at his mansion in Mayfair, found that Bull had not given an exaggerated description of the style in which he lived. George was announced three times before he was ushered into the presence; but here all formality ceased, for Cavendish flew to him as he entered, and grasped both his hands with an expression of ecstacy, and shook them with exuberant warmth: indeed, had he felt sure of making twenty thousand pounds by him that very day, he could not have received him with greater cordiality.

George was the first arrival; but he had not been three minutes in the room before Mr. Horatio Oswald Tynte was announced; and when Mr. Horatio Oswald Tynte had been welcomed by Cavendish, he was duly presented to George.

Mr. Tynte was an exquisite of the most exalted caste. He was frightfully overdressed, and waved his hand with an air; but as he walked upon his toes and twisted his hips at every step, and spoke with a pseudo-aristocratic drawl, it was clear to the quick perception of George that Mr. Horatio Oswald Tynte was not a gentleman.

The next arrival was that of a smiling little fellow, who evidently belonged to that peculiar class who, while they are willing to do any thing for others, and able to do nothing for themselves, are the most constant butts of those whom they most constantly serve. His name was Weesense, but he was known by his associates as the "Immortal Peter." Nature, it appeared, had designed him for a fag. He was never so happy as when running about with the view of promoting the interests of others: he was then active, zealous, indefatigable; he would go to work with spirit and resolution; but in all matters in which his own interests were involved, he was the most nervous, timid, irresolute dog alive. He seemed to think that men were formed to attend to each other's business, that no man ought to be expected to look after his own; at least, he felt, and that strongly, that as he did all he could for every friend, every friend would consider himself bound to do all he could for him. His was therefore essentially a life of disappointments, while his strict adherence to this great mistake kept him continually poor.

The next person announced was decidedly one of the ugliest men nature ever invented. He was a tall, stout, finely-formed, muscular fellow, possessing evidently Herculean strength, but his countenance presented a most extraordinary specimen of ugliness, and he was in consequence commonly called the Beauty. In fact, as "The Beauty" he was introduced to George; but the introduction had scarcely taken place, when Cavendish asked him what he would bet.

"Nothing, mind yar! Safe to half a second!" replied the Beauty.

"I can stand six to four," rejoined Cavendish.

"It won't do, mind yar!—a robbery."

"What is the object of the bet?" inquired George.

"Why, you see," replied the Beauty, "you see, mind yar, a werry particular friend of mine, mind yar—you'll see him in a minute—always keeps his appointments to the sixteenth fraction of a second. He's never before and never after the time nominated, mind yar. I'd back him any day against the sun. There's nothing like him alive. What d'yer think he sticks up for? Why, mind yar, that it's just as incorrect to be before as to be behind. And how d'yer think he proves it? I'll tell yar. He says, because a watch that's a minute too fast is as wrong as a watch that's a minute too slow. What d'yer think of that? Now just look at your watch. Is it right by St. Paul's?"

"It was right by the Horse-Guards at twelve."

"Then that's of no use: it must be by St. Paul's. Now, Petar, where's yours?"

"I left it at home," replied the Immortal.

"You left it at home! Why, you know that's a romance of deep interest, mind yar! You've lent it to a relation of yours to take care of! Don't blush, Petar!—Oh, don't blush!—mine's in the selfsame respectable custody; and, mind yar, I'll bet a million the man isn't alive who can tell me within a month when it'll be out. But I say, mind yar, who's got a watch?"

"All correctly right," observed Cavendish, who held his in his hand. "It wants a moment of a minute to the time."

"Well, Petar," said the Beauty, "what'll you bet the first blow of the knocker is not given before I count five."

"I'll bet you a shilling," cried the Immortal promptly, for he thought it a very safe bet.

"Make it a pound, mind yar?"

"No, no, a shilling."

"Well, put the money down. Now then: *One*—"

"Well, go on!" cried the Immortal, who was very impatient.

"Don't hurry a man, mind yar!—*Two*——"

"Now then! Count away!"

"Be patient, Petar! Nothing like patience Patience is a virtue, a great virtue, Petar; *Three*—"

"Oh, that's a shame!—it's not fair at all!—*too* bad!—oh!" exclaimed the Immortal, at appropriate intervals, while George, Tynte, and Cavendish were roaring with laughter. "Now, is it fair?—Oh!—I'll put it to any one."

"*Four*," cried the Beauty. "Look out for the next, Petar. Mind yar, only one more!"

The Immortal now clearly perceived that he was victimized, and appealed energetically to George as the Beauty proceeded to the sofa, upon which he sat with an aspect of imperturbable gravity, until he

heard the well-known knock of his "werry particular friend," when he exclaimed, "There you are, mind yar!—*Five!*"

The Immortal, it must be confessed, did not approve of this at all; but he had not sufficient time to express his private feelings on the subject, before Foster—a shaggy-browed, heavy, cold-hearted looking man, was ushered into the room.

"Artful again!" cried the Beauty, addressing this very particular friend of his. "So you've been standing at the door with the knocker in your hand again, counting the seconds, eh?—werry deep, mind yar!"

Mr. Foster indulged in a very solemn chuckle, and made a few passing observations to George, whom he regarded most intently

Dinner was now announced, and they proceeded to the dining-room, where George found every thing sumptuous and *recherché*; but neither he, Tynte, Foster, nor Cavendish were able to eat with any degree of comfort: for the Beauty, while he himself ate gravely and heartily, managed to keep them in one continued roar, by virtue of rallying the Immortal Peter.

On the cloth being removed, however, this was discountenanced, and subjects of a more serious character were opened and discussed in a style which clearly proved that all present had acquired much practical knowledge of the world. The speculative mania of the day was of course the chief topic of conversation; and George soon found, not only that his new friends were perfectly conversant with the wild schemes which characterized that period of recklessness and ruin, but that they were actually the projecters of many of the worst from which they were reaping a most abundant harvest.

"The folly of the public," observed George, on being appealed to, "is amazing. On speculative matters men are absolutely mad. They rush headlong into the most palpable snares with their eyes open. But this state of things cannot last; it must speedily end in the ruin of thousands."

"And serve them quite right!" cried Cavendish. "If they will be such visionary fools, they of course deserve to suffer for their folly. They have had plenty of warnings, they are warned every day."

"And the more they are warned, the more reckless they become. They will not receive warnings: they will act upon their own judgment, the soundness of which has never been tested by experience, while they utterly repudiate the experience of others."

"And very proper, mind yar," suggested the Beauty. "What would become of all our dodges if every body, mind yar, was down to the move?"

"Dodges!—and down to the move! This is strange," thought George, "I must draw these people out!—It is clear," said he, addressing the Beauty, "that if people in general knew as much as we know, there would not be much business done under the rose."

"I believe yar, mind yar!"

"And—aw—I don't—aw—see," interposed Mr. Tynte, "why—aw—their eyes should be opened—aw—positively."

"Of course not," rejoined the philanthropic Cavendish. "Let them be closed—ay, and let them be kept closed, till we have made our game. When money is to be made, Mr. Julian, you and I and all other kindred spirits ought to make it; and that this is the time for making money, you know as well as any man in England. And what does it matter how, so long as it is made? That's my maxim. We mustn't in these times be over fastidious. Money-making forms the chief business of a man's life, and he who is above his business never can succeed."

As these and other equally striking observations met with general approval, George inspired the belief that their notions of honour were of a rather peculiar caste. He allowed them, notwithstanding, to go on unchecked—nay, he even encouraged them to proceed; and as they all felt convinced of his being "a kindred spirit" in reality, they warmed upon the subject, and became so communicative at length, that his belief was beyond doubt confirmed. Their ingenuity in dishonourable transactions formed their boast; they related their projects with feelings of pride; they made no sort of secret of their schemes; to them they were a prolific source of amusement, for they conceived an adherence to honour to be the distinguishing characteristic of fools.

The silence, however, of Foster during the whole of this highly intellectual conversation struck George as being extraordinary. He had scarcely spoken a word, and as he sat sipping his wine and listening attentively to his friends, he made no sort of motion by which a stranger could understand whether he approved of the sentiments uttered or not. The impression upon George's mind was that he did not subscribe to those sentiments; but this impression was speedily removed by the Beauty, who undertook to explain for the exclusive edification of George the crack character of his particular friend Foster's last "dodge."

"Oh, that was nothing," said Foster; "it's hardly worth telling."

"Oh, isn't it, mind yar? You found it worth doing. You're too modest by half for to live in this world. But, I say, what have you done with your particular friend the Scotchman?"

"I can do nothing with him—the thing is so absurd."

"I think as you think," observed Cavendish; "and yet I think that something might be done in it too. I should like Mr. Julian to see him now: he'd be the man. He's in the Fleet, still, I suppose?"

"Ay, and likely to remain there. I don't believe that any thing can be done."

"What is the nature of the business?" inquired George.

"Why, the fact of the matter, as far as I understand it, is this: the fellow's a Scotchman who, when a youth, ran away from home, and went to join in the struggle for South American independence as a mere common soldier. He fought well—that I believe; he looks just the sort of fellow to fight, and the consequence was that he got promoted and promoted until at length he became a general officer. Very well; now, while he was abroad, he got in with a swell who is the king of Poyais, or the Mosquito-shore: they became very intimate, intimately intimate,—indeed, so much so, that the chief did him the honour to create him a cazique—which is a prince or something of that sort

—and to give him many hundred miles of land; and the long and short of it is, that he wants, very naturally, to turn this land to some account."

"Petar," cried the Beauty, "you'd better buy it, mind yar."

"Well, it strikes me," said George, "that something might be done even with that. What sort of a country is it?"

"Oh, beautifully beautiful, *he* says, of course!" replied Cavendish; "but I hear that the country is so equally divided that the one half of it is wood and the other half waste. But call upon him. You *may* do some business together. Go and see him: he's always at home; you want no introduction; you can say you heard of him through us. What do you think?"

"Oh, I'll call upon him to-morrow, and hear what he has to say. I don't regard the matter as hopeless."

But they evidently did; and being, therefore, by no means apprehensive of having relinquished an opportunity which they ought to have embraced, they smiled at each other, and the subject was changed.

As the evening advanced, they threw off all restraint; but George, who had taken care to keep himself cool, weighed the importance of every sentence delivered. He found it no longer necessary to *read* their thoughts, for they expressed them with the most perfect freedom, and thus enabled him to see their true characters clearly; but although to a thoughtless, weak-minded man an association with such persons would have been dangerous in the extreme, to George, who was ever on his guard, and whom the ephemeral splendour which crime will sometimes induce could not dazzle, it was harmless; for he had resolutely made up his mind to inflict no intentional injury upon any creature breathing, but to adhere so far to the principles of commercial honour as to enter into no speculation of which merchants in general would be ashamed. He had, therefore, no fear of being corrupted: he felt, in fact, conscious that no temptation could shake the resolution he last formed; and as the general conversation was not only instructive but amusing, he enjoyed himself highly.

When it became rather late, and George thought of taking leave, Cavendish called upon the Beauty to exhibit his antiques.

"He can do them," said he, addressing George, "to the most perfect perfection. There's no man on the stage can equal him at all."

"I flatter myself, mind yar," said the Beauty, "there isn't. Them fellows don't look at the pints, and that makes 'em bad actors, mind yar. Look at Shakspeare! he was an actor, and that accounts for it. He was a clever man, mind yar, that Shakspeare!—but if I'd been by the side of him while he was writing, I'd have put him up to pints that would have made his plays better! Look at Hamlet! That's a very good play is that Hamlet; but look at the pints! I don't mean, mind yar, to say he ought to have acted right and left upon the mere information he got from the ghost; but when he proved out and out that his uncle killed his father, instead of dilly-dallying as Shakspeare has made him do, mind yar, he ought without any delay to have gone in, and given him one for his nob."

"Well, we don't want to hear about Hamlet," said Cavendish. "Come, let us have the antiques."

"Oh! I'll do 'em, but that only shows yar the pints. Now, Petar! Now, look alive, mind yar! Clear the decks while I strip, and then get me a carving-knife, mind yar, a basin, a shovel, and a large sarcepan-lid."

Accordingly, George, Tynte, and Cavendish cleared the table, while the Immortal was getting the articles required; and when all had been prepared, to the entire satisfaction of the Beauty—who, having nothing on him then but his flannel-shirt, stockings, and trousers, looked a beauty indeed—mounted the table, and opened his shoulders to begin.

"Now, the first I shall do," said he, "is Ajax defying of the lightning. Now, Ajax was a Greek swell, mind yar. But there was a couple of Ajaxes, one of 'em slaughtered a whole flock of sheep, which he took for a whole mob of men, after drinking, of course, lots of wines and champaints. But this isn't him. This is the Ajax which went for a sailor, and which, on being shipwrecked, swam to a rock, where the thunder roared, and the lightning flashed above his head, for which he didn't care a dump, as I'll show yar"

He then struck an admirable attitude, one which developed his muscles to perfection: a sculptor would have been in raptures; for he was one of the finest models ever beheld. George applauded him highly, and so did Cavendish and Tynte, while the Immortal Peter's ecstasy was perfectly unbounded.

"Werry good, Petar! werry encouraging," cried the Beauty; "you're a capital audience, mind yar! Now the basin. The next I shall do," he added, having fixed the basin upon his head, with the view of conveying an idea of the *petasus*, "is Mercury. Now, Mercury, mind yar, was an out-and-out thief. He began werry early. We hear a great talk in the present day about juvenile delinquency, but what do you think of him? he stole a whole lot of cows the very day he was born! Look at that. He couldn't have begun much earlier, mind yar! But he rayley was howdacious; indeed, so howdacious that they made him a god. He is what they call, mind yar, the tutelary god of pickpockets and merchants. He presides over the artful classes of the community. Every man which does a swindle is lineally descended from him. On the fifteenth of every blessed May it was regular for the merchants of Rome to hold a festival in honour of him, mind yar, when they sacrificed a whole lot of animals' tongues, to induce him to whitewash them, mind yar, from all the artful measures they had used, and all the falsehoods they had uttered in the regular way of business. This shows yar how much he was respected for being an ingenious swell, and ingenuity will be respected, not only among merchants and pickpockets, mind yar, but wherever it is to be found. Now then," he added, "this is him! What d'yer think of that, Petar?

Again he was loudly applauded, and having remained in Mercury's most approved position for a sufficient length of time, he half extinguished the Immortal Peter with the basin and said,

"The fighting gladiator, mind yar, is the next. Now the gladiators

of Rome were all werry brave fellows, but they never had a fair stand-up fight. They know'd little or nothing about real science. They wouldn't fight with their naked fists, they would have something in them, which, mind yar, was not at all the thing. It was all werry well, you know, when Spartacus led 'em on to knock down the soldiers, because they deserved it; but, had they lived in the present day, they wouldn't have been suffered to enter the ring. This is the way they used to spar; but come up here, Petar!—let you into a secret!"

The Immortal declined this polite invitation, and the Beauty proceeded—

"Now," said he, when he had done with the gladiator, "I shall now show yar Hercules a-struggling with the Nemæan lion. This Hercules was a rattler. There was no mistake about him. When an infant in the cradle, he settled the business of a couple of sarpents by taking and squeeging 'em to death. After that he killed a lion, but that wasn't the other lion, it was another, and then what they call his twelve labours commenced. Well, the first of these labours was the catching and the killing of the out-and-out lion of Nemæa, and when he had caught him, this here is the position in which he then stood."

He then suddenly seized the Immortal Peter by the throat, with the view of illustrating this position with the greatest possible effect, and it cannot be denied that it was most effective.

"Now the last I shall give yar is Achilles," he continued, having let the Immortal loose. "Now, Petar! the sarcepan-lid and carving-knife, mind yar!"

But Peter, who had been more than half strangled, declined the honour of approaching the table again; Cavendish, however, handed the articles in question, and the Beauty returned.

"Now, mind yar," said he, "this Achilles was a warrior, which his mother plunged into the Styx when a child, and made every inch of him inwulnerable, except the heel by which she held on. Now as his mother didn't like him to go to war, she disguised him as a female; but as he made himself familiar with the ladies about the court, he was soon discovered, mind yar; and when she had got Vulcan to make him a suit of armour, proof against all the weapons in the world, he went to war, and did great execution. Well, after cutting away for about ten years, he fell in love with a girl which Paris thought he'd the best right to; and therefore while Achilles was courting her in the temple, Paris stuck an arrow in his wulnerable heel, and thus settled his business. But that's not the pint. The pint is when he's fighting, and then he stood in this way, mind yar, and a capital position it is."

Having sufficiently illustrated the beauty of this position, he descended amidst loud applause; and while he was carefully putting on his clothes behind the screen, the Immortal Peter was engaged in reloading the table. George, however, felt that it was then high time for them to separate; and as this feeling appeared to be generally prevalent, they almost simultaneously rose, and having expressed themselves delighted with the evening's entertainment, had bumpers round and parted.

CHAPTER VI.

GEORGE COMMENCES A SPECULATION WITH HIS HIGHNESS THE CAZIQUE OF POYAIS.

THERE is probably nothing which tends to destroy the business of professional swindlers more than the practice of imprisoning persons for debt. It is a wise law which says in effect, "Make many rogues that roguery may not be confined to a few:" it is wise, because by confining roguish practices to a few, you create a monopoly, and monopolies being pernicious, ought not to be upheld. Trade ought to be open, it ought to be free, competition ought clearly to be unlimited; and to prove that our rulers have for ages understood and appreciated the importance of this proposition, they have established and supported various beautiful prisons designed exclusively for debtors, in the perfect conviction that they are the only universities in England in which the education of men possessed of rotten principles can be rendered complete. Nor is the benefit confined to men whose principles may be said to be too far gone to be restored; the instruction imparted comprehends even the elements of roguery; tyros are taught with amazing expedition; nay, even those who have no wish to learn, get in a short time so thoroughly grounded in the science, that it may with perfect safety be asserted, that out of every hundred men who matriculate, ninety-nine are fit for any thing before they are discharged. These delightful institutions are hence extremely valuable, as means whereby swindling, as an absolute profession, may, by dint of inducing extensive competition, be ruined; seeing that, were it not for such institutions, an ingenious individual might thrive, while, as the case stands, thousands are annually reared to compete with him, and thus to take the bread out of his mouth. It is true that the system has not been so salutary since imprisonment for debt on mesne process has been abolished, still it is very salutary now, inasmuch as the law forms a cobweb for catching little flies, while great ones bounce through it with a buzz. The poor wretch that pays the ten pounds he borrowed of his friend who is equally poor, is remanded for six or nine months on going up to the court for giving an undue preference, and in prison he remains during the whole of that period, living probably on the prison allowance while his family are starving; but the ingenious individual who holds it to be a folly, if not a crime, to pay any man, whether friend or foe, retains the principal counsel, and dashes through the court with *éclat*. And if even he should be remanded, what is it to him? Does *he* lie in prison? The idea is absurd! He may have committed a thousand frauds, and may in consequence be remanded for two years. Why, he laughs at the remand! He has only one judgment against him, and that is a friendly judgment of course. When, therefore, he returns to the prison for the nominal purpose of undergoing his punishment, the detainer is withdrawn, and he in consequence walks out

again, in defiance of the remand, a free man! It will hence be seen that the system is salutary indeed, for while it makes really honest men rogues, it teaches rogues how to escape.

Now George, who had studied this subject rather deeply, and who would have had fraud punished by imprisonment, but not poverty, which he conceived was sufficiently punished by the evils it engendered, did not, when he went to see the Prince of Poyais, expect to find an immaculate man. He knew that he had been in the Fleet for some months, while he also knew that a single week's residence there was enough to corrupt any man breathing, however spotless he might have been when he entered, unless, indeed, he possessed sufficient strength of mind to spurn the specious sophistries with which in a prison the imagination teems. But who could tell that this Prince of Poyais was *not* a strong-minded man! He had evidently been a man of courage! He had distinguished himself, moreover, in a profession in which honour is held to be dearer than life! It was probable, highly probable, that he had escaped contamination, and George, who was not too prone to prejudice, allowed this probability to have its full weight when he called upon him in order to see what could be done.

Having entered the Fleet, he ascended several flights of stone steps, and when at length he had arrived at the particular door to which he had been directed, he gave not a loud but a most decided knock

"Come in," cried a person in a deep commanding tone; and George on entering discovered the Prince of Poyais—a fine, tall, handsome fellow in a Highland dress—carefully cooking a couple of mutton chops.

"General Mc Gregor I believe I have the honour to address?" said George, bowing.

"Mc Gregor is my name."

"My name is Julian. I have called at the suggestion of Mr. Cavendish, with the view of ascertaining if any thing can be done with the land which I understand you have on the Mosquito-shore. But I beg you'll not allow me to interrupt you," added George, waving his hand towards the chops, "I am quite a domestic man myself."

"You are very polite," said Mc Gregor, as he placed a chair with his right hand, while holding one of the chops on a fork in his left, "I cannot, of course, prevail upon you to join me?"

"Oh! I'll take a chop with you with pleasure—I should enjoy it!"

Mc Gregor, who was then extremely poor, held this to be about as bad as robbing a church. He, nevertheless, did—as well as he could under the existing circumstances—screw up a smile, with the view of conveying some idea of the extent to which he felt himself honoured; and proceeded to cook the very chop which, being the finest, he felt that he should be, as a matter of common courtesy, compelled to surrender.

"As you have not, I presume, your servant here, General," said George, "you will probably allow me to order the porter?"

"Oh, by no means; I beg you'll not trouble yourself. Oh, dear me, no; I'm ashamed—"

"Oh, allow me. The chops will be done by the time I return, and then we can sit down comfortably together."

Mc Gregor offered no farther opposition. He did not, in fact, feel himself justified in doing so, considering that he had not a single shilling in his pocket. "It will not be so bad, after all, as I expected," thought he, as George quitted the room. "I don't see how he can order less than a pot, and that's fivepence, while the chop cost only threepence halfpenny. It's a very fair set off, I mustn't grumble; I only wish he'd at the same time order a loaf of bread."

While he was thus engaged with his own private thoughts, George, who had heard of his being, in a pecuniary point of view, in a wretched condition, ordered not only porter but a bottle of sherry, trusting to his own tact to open it without wounding Mc Gregor's feelings. Having paid for these articles he returned to the room, and found the General, who had just done cooking, very anxious to make every thing on the table appear to the best advantage.

"These are the places," said he, as George entered, "to subdue a man's pride, Mr. Julian."

"A man can be more independent," returned George, "in a place like this than he can be at home, which at all events is an advantage. But are you an artist, General?" he added, pointing to the walls, which were adorned with a number of highly grotesque sketches.

"No, they were not done by me, but they are very amusing. They were done by an extremely clever fellow who used to occupy this room, a man of genius, sir, the first artist in his time of the day. But prisons appear to be the home of genius: it is strange, but it is so; mark my words."

At this moment the man brought the porter and the wine, and when Mc Gregor saw the bottle, he brightened up, but felt bound to ask what George had been doing.

"Mr. Julian," he added on perceiving "Sherry" stamped upon the cork, "I must not allow this! It is not right at all! You surely have not paid for it?"

"Why, General, as you so politely invited me to take a chop with you, how could I do less?"

"Mr. Julian, it is really too bad. It is, indeed, much too bad. However, I'll not be offended; but I'll have my revenge, mark my words."

They then commenced, and the wine won the General's heart. He lamented confidentially to himself that he was unable to send for more chops, but as it was, the repast went off well, and they were not a very long time about it.

"Now," said George, when this preliminary had been settled, "suppose we turn to business. This land, I believe, is on the Mosquito shore. What sort of land is it?"

"Excellent land, sir!—rich beyond conception. He who has it, sir, with capital to work it, will have one of the most valuable possessions in the world. But it is not the land alone I look at, although that, if employed for agricultural purposes only, would yield a brilliant fortune—

it is at the mines of wealth beneath sir, for, mark my words, there is not such a place in the universe for mines as Poyais."

"It is, I presume, absolutely your own?"

"Oh! that I can prove beyond doubt," replied Mc Gregor, drawing a document from his writing-desk. "Here is the grant."

George looked at this document, which was signed "George Frederic Augustus, King of the Mosquito-shore," in favour of "His Highness Mc Gregor, Cazique of Poyais."

"This appears to be perfectly correct," said George, having perused it with care. "Well; what are your views?"

"Why, I am anxious to raise money upon the property in some way, depositing this as security; or I should not be indisposed even to sell it out and out."

"It will be difficult, I apprehend, to find a purchaser," said George "and I fear that upon such security alone you will never be able to raise a shilling. But what sort of people are the inhabitants—civilized or savage?

"Why, they have not had the advantage of European institutions, of course, but they are a fine, energetic, intelligent people, equal to anything; bold, courageous, full of activity and spirit."

"And the country itself: is the climate salubrious?"

"The finest climate in the world!—it never rains, the dews of night alone supply sufficient moisture; you may live there for years without seeing a cloud. It is a lovely country—I have travelled much in my time, as you must be aware, but I never in my life was in a country more beautiful than that."

"It would be then an excellent place for British emigrants?"

"Admirable! mark my words, sir, that is the very country to which they ought to go,—the very country!"

"Well!" said George, who conceived the idea of raising the benighted Indians in the social scale, by imparting to them the blessings of civilization; "in that case it strikes me that something may be done. Is this king an intellectual man?"

"Highly intellectual."

"A man of comprehensive views?"

"He has a mind, sir, capable of grasping the affairs of an entire world."

"And you acquired, I presume, considerable influence over him while you were there?"

"So much that I could induce him to do any thing I pleased; in fact he had, although I say it, the most perfect confidence in my judgment."

"All which is decidedly in our favour. Now, General, do you think that by explaining to him the mode by which civilized states amass wealth, by pointing out to him the advantages which spring from the introduction of artificial wants, and by proving to him how easily they may be taxed when they become real, you could prevail upon him to join you in an honourable scheme, whereby his revenues might be greatly increased, and the condition of his people materially improved?"

"I have not the slightest doubt of it."

"If he can be induced to do that, I see my way in this matter more clearly."

"Oh! I'd stake my existence that he would not for a moment hesitate. But how do you propose to proceed?"

"First, to obtain his full and formal authority for raising a loan, and when that has been obtained, I'll undertake to raise it."

"Exactly!" cried Mc Gregor, whose countenance in an instant brightened up into an expression of rapture. "Exactly;—I see!—oh, I'll write to him at once!"

"But it cannot be done by writing."

"Not be done by writing, eh? How then is it to be done?"

"He must be seen and consulted!—an affair of this kind is not to be accomplished by a letter! The better plan will be for you to go over to him, and bring back with you his authority, and all the security he can offer."

"Go over?—Go over to Poyais?" cried Mc Gregor, whose countenance fell; "can it not be done without that?"

"No other course can be effectual."

"But how can I go over, my good friend? In the first place, you must have forgotten where we are."

"No, I have not. But I presume that you are not here for a very heavy sum?"

"No; it isn't very heavy; and yet it is under the circumstances too—it is nearly sixty pounds."

"Sixty pounds. Well, that must be managed. Do you see any other objection?"

"Mr. Julian, you deal so ingenuously with me, that you compel me to be equally candid with you. The fact is, sir, I cannot go over; I haven't a shilling. The dress I now wear is the only one I have in my possession, and that claymore which you see standing yonder, and which has saved my life fifty times, must follow the rest of my property in the morning. I am not, therefore, in a position to go. The trip alone would cost nearly a hundred pounds."

"Well, believing you to be a strictly honourable man—believing that throughout this business you intend to deal as justly with me as I mean to deal with you, I'll venture to say that even *that* may be managed. At all events, you may calculate on being out of this place in the course of to-morrow. Let me have the address of your detaining creditor, and I'll do the best I can with him; but, Mc Gregor, as I am not a rich man, as I am struggling through life like yourself, you must pledge me your *honour* that, whether failure or success be the result of our project, you will be firm in the adherence to that just course which can alone permanently bind man to man."

"My dear friend," said Mc Gregor, who was nearly overcome by the ingenuous earnestness of George, "what can I say—by what can I swear? Propose your own oath, and I'll most freely take it."

"Mc Gregor," said George, "he who does not feel sufficiently bound by his own word of honour can be secured by no oath. I believe you,

as I said before, to be a strictly honourable man, but I am anxious to impress upon your mind that if you deceive me, situated as I am, you may involve me in ruin. Pledge me your honour, my friend, and I shall be satisfied that, whatever may occur, that pledge will not be broken."

"Then I give you that pledge, Mr. Julian, with perfect sincerity; I give it unreservedly, sir, with all my heart! By my sacred honour, Mr. Julian, I swear that you shall never on any point, however minute or apparently unimportant, be deceived in this or any other matter by me."

"I am satisfied," said George, "quite satisfied. I firmly believe that I shall not be deceived, and I shall therefore do all in my power to serve you. I might have felt myself secure in the full conviction of your being bound by interest to deal justly with me, seeing that this is no pitiful project, but one which, if successful, will be the means of placing us both in a position of independence; but as men will sometimes take strangely erroneous views of their own interest, I have learned to regard that as no security at all. But we have said quite enough on this subject—you understand my object in pressing it so far. I am perfectly satisfied with the pledge you have given, and to-morrow I think you may fairly calculate upon being a free man. I will first call upon an influential friend of mine in the city, who, I have no doubt, will join us in this speculation, and then I will go direct to this person—this creditor of yours, and come to some arrangement with him. In the mean time," he added, taking a five-pound note out of his pocket-book, "I want you to make use of that. Nay, nay!—I merely lend it,—and that for my own sake as well as yours. You'll certainly catch cold if you come out in that kilt, and a cold might be the means of delaying our proceedings."

"Mr. Julian," said Mc Gregor, taking the hand of George and looking at him earnestly, "I don't know how to thank you."

"Well then, don't attempt to do it at all. I shall be quite as well satisfied."

"But I *do* thank you—ay, from my heart, and my actions shall prove to you how highly I appreciate your kindness."

"Well, well, let us say no more about it: let us direct all our thoughts to the object proposed. For the present I leave you: I may look in again in the course of the evening, to let you know how I get on."

Mc Gregor again and again expressed his thanks as he accompanied George to the gate, where he described the anxiety he should feel during his absence.

"Pray let me see you this evening!" said he. "I shall be on the rack until I see you again."

"I will at all events write," returned George, "if I find it impossible to come; but depend upon it, General, if I can, I will be here."

"Thank you! God bless you, my good friend, adieu!"

George then took his leave, and with the feelings of one inspired with the consciousness of having done his duty as a man, while laying

the foundation of an honourable fortune, he proceeded at once to the Exchange, where he found Bull standing by his favourite pillar, in the act of taking snuff with great violence.

"My dear boy," said he with a sorrowful expression, as George approached him, "I'm going to the dogs, I am; no business doing, shares down, dreadfully down they are, nothing can save me"

George smiled, and that smile lighted up Bull's countenance in an instant.

"Have you any thing fresh?" he inquired.

"Why I do think of raising a loan!"

"Ah!—yes!—well!—well!—What is it?"

"Have you any appointment here?"

"No, my dear boy; and if I had—but I haven't: come, where shall we go?"

"To your office if you like."

"Very well, let's be off," said Bull, impatiently, thrusting his arm in George's, and dragging him along. "Is it a good thing, my boy? Is it a good thing?"

"I *think* so."

"Then I'm sure of it, I am. I can't guess what it is, but I feel that it's good, I do. What's the loan for, and about what amount?"

"Oh, perhaps half-a-million or more: we shall see."

They now reached the office, and having passed into Bull's private room, George related the substance of what had transpired between him and Mc Gregor.

With this relation Bull was delighted. "Oh!" he exclaimed, "we'll get up the loan, my dear boy, and then I'll introduce it to the house."

"The Stock Exchange you mean?"

"Of course."

"That will be of great importance."

"It will *take*, it will. Nothing could be better. It'll do, my dear boy: it's a hit! this Mc Gregor must be off as soon as possible, he must. Let me see: sixty pounds to get him out, and a hundred to send him over, and then he wants a few pounds himself—say the whole will amount to two hundred: two hundred—can he give no security? How do we know he'll come back again? Deep dogs these Scotchmen, very slippery they are. We ought to have some security!—what do you think?"

"Decidedly, if he has any to offer: but if he has not?"

"It's a large sum of money, is two hundred pounds; and he's a stranger to us, he is."

"True; but I nevertheless feel disposed to trust him. Besides, in the event of success, it will be an excellent thing for him as well as for us."

"We have him there; yes, I think we have him there; still there's nothing like tangible security. He may die on his passage, he may, there's no telling."

"Then we had better, perhaps, insure his life before he starts," said George smiling.

"You see *that'll* cost five or six pounds!"

"*I* think we may risk it. At all events, we must in this case either do that or nothing."

"Well, my dear boy, I'll be guided by you; but don't you think now that this Mr. What's-his-name, his creditor, ought to be quite content with ten shillings in the pound?"

"Perhaps you will be able to induce him to think so."

"You see it's a bad debt, a very bad debt; he ought to think himself lucky to get that, he ought."

"Well, try him; you will be able to manage it better than I shall."

"Oh! you are too liberal by half! You'll excuse my telling you, I mean no offence; but you are. He ought to take ten shillings in the pound. It's a capital dividend. I shall tell him if he don't he'll get nothing, eh? that's the way to put it."

"Well, use your own discretion, proceed as you please; I shall pay half the sum whatever it may be; but allow me to suggest that we ought to see him at once.

"Yes, exactly, no time must be lost. Let me see, you haven't dined, nor have I. Let's go to a tavern in the neighbourhood, and send for him, eh? What do you think? A few glasses of wine, you know, will soften him, eh? But then he lives at the west-end, and the west-end taverns are high in their charges, they are, very high—exorbitant."

"But if we spend thirty shillings and gain thirty pounds, it will pay us pretty well, I think?"

"Yes;—well then, let us be off."

They accordingly started, and during their westward progress, Bull stopped short at least fifty times, with the view of putting certain questions, and suggesting certain points, having reference to the project, with greater effect. They did, notwithstanding, eventually reach the west-end, and having entered a tavern, they had a hasty dinner, and then sent for Mr. Tregoose.

Bull at this time felt sure of inducing that gentleman to accept the composition proposed, for while he had the highest confidence in the power of his own suasive eloquence, he conceived, that as Tregoose was a tailor, and as Mc Gregor couldn't pay, a fair reference to those important facts, well worked up, would be sufficient. When, however, Mr. Tregoose made his appearance, Bull saw that he had met with his match, for while Mr. Tregoose bore a very striking physical resemblance to himself, his thin, hard, compressed lips, and quick scrutinizing glances, convinced him that he was a man who, if he saw the slightest prospect of getting the whole, would, as a point of principle, loose the whole rather than consent to take a part. Bull was, however, by no means dismayed, although the eyes of Tregoose *were* buried beneath his brows; he explained to him that Mc Gregor would inevitably have to go through the Court, unless a composition were accepted; when he and Tregoose went earnestly to work, and of all the ingenious and extraordinary falsehoods ever uttered by men in support of their views, those put forth by this well-matched pair, were of a character by far the *most* ingenious

and extraordinary, while the number of them, branching out as they did from two separate roots, might have defied all human calculation.

Having been at it most zealously for nearly three hours (for as Tregoose saw, or thought he saw, a chance of getting the whole, he was inexorable), Bull, viewing it as a point of honour, and feeling bound to beat him, ordered coffee, when George, who could not see the most remote prospect of either giving in, wrote a note to Mc Gregor, and desired the porter to take it immediately to the Fleet; and it was fortunate for Mc Gregor that he did so, for had he gone down himself, he would have found that gentleman lying upon the floor in a state of speechless intoxication!

Had this been known, the negotiation would soon have been brought to a close, but as it was not, Bull and Tregoose kept at it with unabated spirit until half-past ten; when, as Tregoose had refused fourteen shillings in the pound, sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen, he declared at length, that he would not take nineteen shillings and elevenpence three-farthings, when Bull drew a check for the whole amount, and complimented him highly on his being one of the closest-fisted fellows he ever met with in his life.

Having arrived at this glorious consummation—for glorious it was held to be by Mr. Tregoose, that gentleman insisted upon paying the bill, and as Bull's opposition to this was not remarkable for its strength, it was accordingly settled by Mr. Tregoose, and they parted with the perfect understanding that Mc Gregor should be discharged by twelve o'clock the next day.

On leaving the tavern, George accompanied his friend Bull to Bishopsgate-street, and having seen him safely seated in a Stoke Newington stage, proceeded home, where he found Jane, for whom he had sent as a companion to Julia.

As he entered, the devoted Julia flew to him as usual, and embraced him with the warmest, the fondest affection, while Jane stood as if she had been struck with paralysis. She could scarcely believe her own eyes!—it was some time before she *would* believe them! Could he in reality be the gentleman who came to pay his addresses to Miss Julia! She never did see such a change in so short a space of time!

"Why, dear me!" she exclaimed, when George had happily succeeded in establishing his identity. "How handsome you have grown, to be sure! Why you used to wear a black silk handkerchief; but, oh dear! that white one is so much more becoming. Well, I shouldn't have known you: I shouldn't; as true as I'm alive I shouldn't have known you. Why you have grown so delightfully tall! and your whiskers!—Well!—I never!"

George was highly amused by the ecstasy into which he had thrown Jane, and so was Julia; they both enjoyed it amazingly, and let her run on unchecked till they retired, and she did run on with surpassing velocity, for the great, the delightful alteration in his appearance was a thing which she could *not* forget.

In the morning George rose at his usual early hour, and went immediately after breakfast direct to the Fleet, where he found Mc Gregor

looking very haggard and pale, a fact which he himself ascribed to the anxiety he had endured; and as George thought this extremely natural under the circumstances, he sought to raise his spirits by informing him at once that all had been settled with Mr. Tregoose.

"But come!" cried George, "where are your clothes? We must prepare!"

"I sent a man for them last night," said Mc Gregor, "and as he has not yet returned with either the money or the clothes, I begin to feel very much alarmed!—I am almost afraid he never will."

"Why, that is very villanous. However, give me the duplicates: I'll go for them myself."

"Unfortunately he has got them!—I sent them with the note."

"Tut, tut! Are there no means of finding this scoundrel?"

"I am afraid not."

"Well! you must have clothes; that is quite clear. Just pack up your things, and I'll run for a tailor."

George, being of course unconscious of the fact that Mc Gregor had lost the greater part of the money he had given him at cribbage, and spent the remainder in drink, accordingly started, and soon returned with a tailor, who happened to have a ready-made suit which proved to be a most admirable fit. For this suit, of course, George paid at once, and as the discharge came down punctually at twelve, a coach was sent for, when he and Mc Gregor, with his trunks, left the prison without further delay.

As George was anxious to introduce him as soon as possible to Bull, they left the trunks at the Belle Sauvage, and proceeded to the office direct. Here the affair was again canvassed, and they became more sanguine than ever of success. Bull was perfectly delighted with the appearance of Mc Gregor, who received his instructions, having reference to the authority of the king, the resources of the country, the revenues to be derived from the application of the loan, and so on, the whole of which Mc Gregor very clearly understood, and in two days from that time he started with a hundred and thirty pounds in his possession.

CHAPTER VII.

GEORGE BECOMES CONNECTED WITH A CASE OF BIGAMY.

A FEW days after the departure of Mc Gregor, George, while testing the practicability of establishing a bank without capital, was visited by Mr. Horatio Tynte. This visit surprised him, especially as Tynte looked extremely pale, and trembled, as he entered, with violence.

"Mr. Julian," said he, and he seemed almost breathless as he spoke, "I have to make a thousand apologies for calling, but I am at the present time in a position so dreadful that unless you consent to aid me I am ruined!"

"Indeed!" cried George. "Explain to me the nature of your position; and if I can render you any assistance, I will."

"Mr. Julian, if, when I have explained all, you find that you cannot, you will not betray me?"

"I will not: no, upon my honour."

"Had I not the utmost confidence in you, although a comparative stranger, I should not have thus ventured to call; nor would the confidence I repose in you alone have induced me to do so; but having heard so much of your talent and ingenuity, I looked upon you as being the only man in existence capable of enabling me to avert the destruction with which I am menaced. I am, Mr. Julian, a married man: I have been married for years, but six months ago, being dreadfully poor, I advertised for a wife, with the view of making money, and the result of that advertisement was a secret introduction to a young lady with ten thousand pounds at her command. I had no intention of marrying her!—not the slightest at first; but as I found it impossible to obtain possession of any part of her property *without*, I eventually did so."

"Your former wife being still alive?—Well, sir?"

"Well, Mr. Julian, after marriage all was confidence on her part, all happiness and devotion. I found her an affectionate amiable creature, whom I hated myself almost for having deceived: still all went on well—for, of course, *she* had not the least suspicion,—until yesterday, when to my horror I found that, by some means with which I am as yet unacquainted, she had ascertained all! She knows the very date of my first marriage, the church, the minister,—in fact, every thing connected with it; and now I am threatened with an indictment for bigamy, which to me, known so well as I am, will amount to transportation for life! This, Mr. Julian, is the position in which I am placed. Can you aid me? Can you point out any means by which I can escape? If you can, sir, for mercy's sake do!"

"Allow me a few minutes," said George, calmly, "to reflect upon the matter." And he buried his face in his hands.

"This," thought he, "is a heartless villain: a wretch! I *could* suggest the means by which his escape might be accomplished, but, should I be justified in doing so? This is the question I have now to answer to myself. What if he be punished by transportation? He deserves it richly; but what advantage will be derived from that punishment by the poor devoted heart-stricken creature whom he has deceived? None. But can his escape be beneficial to her? That is the point. I consider her only in this matter, I have no consideration for him."

Having dwelt upon this point for some time, he raised his head, and found that Tynte had been watching him with an anxiety the most intense.

"You, of course," said he, "obtained full possession of the ten thousand pounds?"

"I did," replied Tynte.

"Has she any other property?"

"Not any."

"No expectations?"

"None."

"Then in the event of your being transported—I say in that event, she will be left completely destitute?"

"She has an aunt, but I believe that she is poor."

"How much of the ten thousand pounds have you spent? Deal fairly and openly with me, and you have a chance, but if any thing be concealed, you have none. How much have you spent?"

"I should say that I have spent and lost nearly six thousand."

"Six thousand: a thousand a month. Well, you have now, therefore, four thousand pounds in your possession?"

"About four."

"Where is it?"

"Oh, I have it about me in cash. When I ascertained that all had been discovered, I of course thought it better to secure it."

"Of course! very prudent, especially if you were now to be taken into custody! But, independently of that consideration, and without entering into the slightest explanation, having reference to my view of your conduct, seeing that that would be perfectly useless, I see my way so clearly in this matter, that I am prepared to come to terms with you at once. In the first place, I'll undertake to get you so entirely out of this difficulty that, even in the eye of the law, you shall be in the same position as you were before the marriage took place."

"By getting hold of the register?"

"No; there are witnesses, I presume, whose evidence can be had. This is not an old affair, you will remember."

"But can it be done without its being necessary for me to leave England?"

"It can: I repeat to you, that you will be in the same position as you were before; that no law in existence relating to bigamy can afterwards touch you; that you will be able to set law at defiance; that you will, in short, be a free man."

"But how is this to be done?"

"That I will explain when our contract is complete. My part of it I have stated: the performance of your part will be far less difficult; it being, in fact, simply this—that in consideration of the service proposed, you agree to secure that four thousand pounds to her whom you have so deeply injured."

"What, the whole?" exclaimed Tyate, with an expression of amazement.

"The whole," replied George.

"And leave myself utterly destitute?"

"Look at the utter destitution of her—but I will not moralize: painful as it is to me, and as it would be to any man blessed with the feelings of a man, I consent to treat this cruel affair as a matter of business merely."

"But consider, Mr. Julian! I shall scarcely have a single pound left."

"I do consider, sir:—be exactly what you have."

Tynte drew forth his pocket-book and counted the notes. He found that there were four thousand two hundred pounds.

"Well," said George, "in order that you may not be without a pound, keep the two hundred, and deliver up the rest."

"These are very hard terms, Mr. Julian."

"On no other terms will I consent to interfere; and unless I do, recollect nothing can save you."

"Well, but let us say *two* thousand?"

"No; nothing less than the four, sir, will do. I pledged you my honour that I would not betray you: that pledge shall remain unbroken; but I strongly advise you to come to my terms, and that immediately, for now every hour teems with danger."

"But when the money is given up, how am I to be secure?"

"You said that you had confidence in me. I will not, however, test that confidence further. You know Bull to be a responsible man. Let the money be placed in his hands, and I will give him at the same time authority to return it, if my part of the contract be not faithfully performed. Shall I send for him?"

Tynte hesitated.

"Remember," continued George, "in this matter there must be no delay. I do not, for obvious reasons, appeal to your sense of justice: I am anxious for *you* to look at the thing solely with a view to your own safety. Is he to be sent for?"

"Well, I must submit: let him come."

George then despatched a message to Bull, requesting him to come without delay; and in the mean time he drew up two papers, one authorizing the payment of the money to Tynte's second wife, setting forth her maiden name; and the other directing it to be returned to Tynte, in the event of the conditions therein named not being fulfilled. These papers were duly signed and sealed; and as Bull, in a state of trembling anxiety, soon appeared, Tynte was requested to put down the money.

"Mr. Bull," observed George, "here are notes to the amount of four thousand pounds. Will you do me the favour to hold them? It will be but for a very few days. Here are also two documents, the seals of which are not to be broken till application be made for the money. You will be kind enough to take possession of them?"

"Certainly, certainly!—oh, certainly!" replied Bull, who looked as if the thing were not exactly clear to him.

"Thank you," said George; "you will excuse my troubling you; but I knew that they could not be placed in safer hands than yours."

Bull looked at the packet, and then at George, and then at Tynte, in a very mysterious manner; but, perceiving that nothing more was required of him then, he slowly moved towards the door. He did feel—he could not help feeling, that a little additional explanation would not be by any means unpleasant; but as it was, why, he left with all his characteristic grace.

"Now," said George, "I must get you indicted."

"What!" exclaimed Tynte, starting up with an expression of rage.

"Be calm, sir; be calm," said George.

"Calm!"

"If you will not hear me, how can we proceed?"

"Am I after all to be betrayed?"

"No!—Listen. I must get you indicted—indicted for bigamy.—Now don't be impatient!—you must be tried, when, as I shall arrange it, you *must* be acquitted, and when you are, you will be, in the eye of the law, in precisely the same position in which you stood before the marriage, seeing that no man can be tried a second time for the same offence."

Tynte's countenance instantly changed, and he at once resumed his seat.

"But," said he, after a pause, "is it possible for this to be done?"

"I undertake to do it. The laws of England, sir, are so conveniently framed, that in almost any case it is possible to escape them."

"But will it be safe?"

"Nothing can be more so. The ordeal through which you will have to go may not be pleasant; but you will have the satisfaction of knowing that, having passed that ordeal, you will be a free man. Now, for the next few days you must be absent; you must, in fact, keep out of the way until I want you. Let me know where you are, and let me also have the address of Mrs. Tynte, I mean your second wife, of course. You may rely upon my using all possible despatch, and you shall either see or hear from me daily."

"I shall not be deprived of my liberty long?"

"You shall not be in custody twenty-four hours."

"Well," said Tynte, "this is very unpleasant! However, as it must be, it must. Here is the address of Mrs. Tynte; and I'll let you know this evening where I am to be found. I leave myself entirely in your hands, Mr. Julian: you have the power to destroy me at once; but as I have confidence in you, more, in fact, than I have in any other man alive, I consider myself, notwithstanding, safe."

"You may," returned George; "that which I have undertaken I'll perform."

Tynte, with many warm expressions of gratitude, then took his leave, and George at once set to work.

His first object was to see the poor lady who had been thus cruelly deceived; and, in pursuance of this object, he went immediately home, and then, accompanied by Julia, proceeded to her residence.

On their arrival they found her in the deepest affliction. She was a gentle, interesting creature, very beautiful, and very young; and while George was explaining to her the object of his visit, she and Julia, who was almost equally affected, wept over each other like children.

Having related the substance of all that occurred, and partially explained how he meant to proceed, he begged of her earnestly, for her own sake, not to interfere, when she fell upon her knees and seized his hand, and having blessed him, kissed it passionately and bathed it with her tears.

"I would not injure him for the *world*!" she exclaimed in tones of

agony, which pierced the heart both of Julia and of George. "He has been cruel, very cruel; but, oh! I would not *injure* him, although he has so deeply injured me!"

George raised her, and feelingly implored her to be tranquil, and if kindness could have soothed her, she must have been calm; but she continued to weep bitterly, while Julia sobbed as if her heart were bursting, until George, knowing all that he desired to know, offered to leave Julia till the evening, which offer was gratefully accepted, and h left the afflicting scene quite unmanned.

The Surry sessions were about to be held, and George saw that no time was to be lost. He remembered that Jones had introduced him to an old friend of his, an attorney, and upon him he accordingly called.

As his grand object was to blind the police, the magistrates, the judge, counsel, jury, and all, he considered it unsafe to impart the secret to this gentleman, as he probably would not understand, or if he did, he might not, perhaps, appreciate the motive which induced him to act. He therefore instructed him to prepare an indictment against the prisoner, without stating that he was not yet in custody, and also to draw up a formidable brief in support of the prosecution, in which the whole of the facts were to be faithfully set forth, and a copy of the certificate of each marriage given with the names of the attesting witnesses, and so on, in order that the whole thing might seem so clear that, if supported by any evidence at all, no doubt could be entertained of a conviction; and having done this, he went to another attorney, and instructed him to draw up a brief for the defence.

He represented to them both the necessity for despatch, and they promised to be as expeditious as possible; and having thus placed matters in a very fair train, he dined with Bull, to whom he explained just as much as he felt it to be necessary for him to know, and then went to call for Julia.

Sympathy—perhaps the most enchanting of all the attributes of the heart—is, indeed, universal; but its power is felt most when the heart is most pure. It then soothes our sorrows so sweetly, that we really almost love to be sorrowful, conscious of the tendency of sorrow being to develop those beautiful feelings which surround us, when sunk to the depths of despair, with the heavenly halo of hope. In this case, so powerful had been its influence that she whom George had left a few hours before in a paroxysm of agony had now become perfectly calm. Hope beamed from her eye with comparative brightness: she looked as if she felt that she was not destroyed: in every feature the spirit of resignation was portrayed, and she seemed to have inspired that firm trust in God which imparts a new light to the soul.

As George entered they both flew to meet him, and he found that during his absence they had become like sisters. Mrs. Tynte had begged of Julia to call her Helen, and as there existed a perfect reciprocity of feeling between them, they addressed each other as Julia and Helen as familiarly as if they had been dear friends for years.

George being most anxious not to revert to the painful subject which had them drawn together, if it could by possibility be avoided, spoke gaily of this suddenly-conceived friendship, and ventured to express a hope that it would last, and that Helen and Julia would see each other frequently; about which he need not have troubled himself at all, for all that had been settled before he returned.

Just, however, as George was about to take leave, Helen pressed his hand and said, as her eyes swam with gratitude; "I know the unbounded generosity of your nature: I know the unconquerable energy of your mind: I know all from my dear, dear Julia, who can explain to you how grateful I feel better than I can, and who has inspired me with the conviction, that if I place myself entirely in your friendly hands, all that it is possible to do will be done. But believe me," she added, and her tears now began to choke her utterance; "I cannot express what I feel; but I *do* feel grateful—most grateful—"

She wished to say more, but her heart was too full to allow her to proceed. George assured her that nothing which he possessed the power to do should be left undone; and when Julia had taken an affectionate farewell, they left her comparatively happy.

In the morning George was early on the alert, and as Tynte had informed him of the place of his retreat, he went at once to ascertain the names of those who were to appear for the prosecution in the brief as attesting witnesses. One of these, a Mrs. Jenks, a poor woman whom Tynte pointed out as being the most likely person to answer George's purpose, she having been present at the former marriage, was fixed upon, and George went to sound her forthwith. He found her apt and very indignant on becoming acquainted with the object of his visit. Oh! she would do any thing to transport the villain! Nothing *could* give her so much satisfaction. The idea of marrying two wives! Why, she would go to the very farthest extremity of the world to convict him!

Having permitted Mrs. Jenks, who was a very honest woman, to give vent to her indignation for some time with great freedom, he presented her with an earnest of his intentions, and promised to give her five pounds clear of all her expenses, provided she preserved the strictest secrecy, and in all respects followed his instructions. This she solemnly promised to do; and as George made secrecy a *sine quâ non*, impressing upon her, that if it became known it might defeat the very object he had in view, in which case she would lose the reward, he had not the slightest doubt of that promise being kept.

This was the first day of the sessions, and on leaving Mrs. Jenks (who was directed to hold herself in readiness to go with him in the morning), George proceeded to the attorneys, had the names of the witnesses inserted in the brief for the prosecution, and before night all was prepared.

The next morning, every thing being in perfect readiness, Tynte was directed to be at a certain inn in the borough of Southwark at ten. He accordingly went; but just as he was about to enter the house, Mrs. Jenks—whom George had brought to the spot in a coach just before—

rushed at him—seized him with a masculine grasp, and pinned him with an air of triumph, until she had given him into custody.

Being thus secured, he was taken, when the magistrates arrived, to Union Hall; and as Mrs. Jenks joyfully attended, the magistrates felt justified in remanding him to give time for all the other witnesses to appear, and he was accordingly removed to Horsemonger-lane gaol.

As Tynte was now actually in custody, a fact necessary to assist in finding a bill against him, the indictment was taken before the grand jury, then sitting, and as a matter of course, a true bill was obtained the same day.

This, indeed, may be said to be a matter of course, for the grand jury system—of which an explanation will be given anon—was then and is still a disgrace to this country.

Well, Tynte having slept rather fitfully during the night, for it may with propriety be stated that neither his room nor his bed met his views, was early next morning, without any ceremony, and without being allowed even time to attend to his toilet, hurried into court with a crowd of other prisoners, and thrust into the dock to plead to the indictment. Here the clerk of the crown informed him that as he had so recently been taken into custody, he might, if he chose, traverse till the next sessions, which was kind on the part of the clerk of the crown; but Tynte declared that, being of course conscious of his innocence, he was ready to take his trial at once, which had a very good effect.

On the case being called, Tynte made an application through his counsel—who, as well as the counsel for the prosecution, had had his brief left at his chambers the previous evening with the fee—to the effect that all the witnesses in the case should be ordered out of court. Out of court they were accordingly ordered, which had a tendency to satisfy the counsel for the prosecution that all his witnesses were there, more especially as when the crier called out with his usual distinctness, "The witnesses—prosecution—King against Tynte!" Mrs. Jenks very correctly cried "Here!" to signify, of course that they *were* in attendance.

The counsel for the prosecution then began, and he opened the case bravely. He undertook to show that the prisoner was one of the most heartless individuals that ever were suffered to crawl upon the earth, and boldly pledged his personal honour, in conjunction with his professional reputation—and he was a man of high standing at the bar—that he had witnesses to prove the unparalleled truth of what he stated, witnesses to prove every thing by evidence the most unquestionable, witnesses of high character and undoubted respectability, witnesses whose testimony could not be impugned.

While the eloquent gentleman was going on thus with great warmth and dexterity, George, having given a letter to a person to deliver to the prisoner, when the counsel for the prosecution had concluded—left the court, and taking Mrs. Jenks, who was anxiously waiting outside, and panting to give her evidence, under his arm, walked with due deliberation out of the neighbourhood, clearly explaining to her that as it was highly improbable that he should require her evidence that

day, he would see her safely home, when, being quite satisfied of her laudable intention of doing all in her power to send the prisoner out of the country, he would willingly pay her the five pounds at once. Mrs. Jenks, who felt flattered by this declaration of confidence, not having even the most remote suspicion of the object in view, accompanied him with infinite gladness of heart, and congratulated herself warmly upon having the five pounds secure. On their way, however, it struck George as being just possible that as the residence of Mrs. Jenks happened to be known, she might be sent for; and as he thought it as well to guard against even that possibility, he suggested that, instead of her going directly home, it would perhaps be more safe to drop in at some tavern and have a quiet dinner, in order that he might afterwards run back to the court, to see how matters were progressing. As this suggestion was held to be admirable by Mrs. Jenks—who declared that she would not have the wretch escape for worlds—it was adopted. They entered a tavern and ordered dinner, and while it was being prepared, George gave Mrs. Jenks the five pounds he had promised, and heard a repetition of the whole of the evidence with which she intended to favour the court. By the time this was finished, dinner was produced, and they both ate with great satisfaction. George, however, being anxious to ascertain how matters stood, although he knew that nothing more on his part was required, paid the bill almost immediately on the cloth being removed, and having given Mrs. Jenks full instructions to proceed directly home, in the event of his not returning within an hour, departed.

While this branch of the business was being managed, the court presented an unexampled scene of confusion; for when the eloquent counsel for the prosecution had concluded his withering speech, wherein he established the immaculate character of his witnesses firmly in the minds of all present, not one could be found. Their names were called again and again by the crier; but no—that acute individual declared that he had seen them all in a heap just before, and could not withhold the important intimation that he looked upon their absence at that extremely critical juncture as being odd. Time was allowed by the court to hunt some of them up, but in vain; every public-house in the vicinity was searched, but not one in "The King *versus* Tynte," could be brought up, dead or alive.

At this period Tynte, according to the instructions of George, the whole of which he bore in mind, pressed his counsel to admit the first marriage, and that learned person did then publicly declare that the prisoner had suggested the expediency of said first marriage being admitted, in order to facilitate the business, and to show that none were more desirous that no advantage should be taken of the temporary absence of a witness than said prisoner himself.

The court deemed this very straight-forward and very correct, and so indeed did the counsel for the prosecution; it had certainly relieved him of the onus of proving the first marriage, but where were all the witnesses whose testimony touched upon the second?

While the counsel for the prosecution was pausing for a reply to this

natural question, a letter was delivered to Tynte, the silent but most expressive reading of which created considerable curiosity in court. Having read it, Tynte handed it to his counsel, who appeared to be delighted with it, and smiled most triumphantly, and then began to taunt the learned counsel for the prosecution, and to inquire very affectionately after those respectable witnesses, whose characters were not to be impugned!—which was very amusing to all, save the learned individual addressed, who felt nettled, especially as he had laid himself open to these sarcastic taunts, by the red-hot delivery of his flaming speech, wherein he dwelt with peculiar emphasis upon his witnesses, precisely as if the common run of witnesses, compared with them, were fools Hence, the more he reflected upon his position, the warmer he became; for he couldn't at all understand it. Who was the attorney? There was certainly some strange name endorsed on the brief, but the hand was so queer, that no soul could make it out!

"People will write such sticks," said he, "really it's amazing." And he twisted it and turned it upside down with the view of getting at it in that way, and then tried to spell it, until at length he got into such a rage with it, that he felt himself bound to apply to the court to stop the trial for an hour ostensibly in order that he might find those witnesses who were still so mysteriously invisible.

As no opposition was offered to this, the business of the court was suspended for an hour, during which time the counsel for the prosecution and a host of learned friends put their heads together strictly with the view of making out the crooked hieroglyphics which appeared upon the back of the brief.

The question was, what earthly name did it look like? It was no name at all in reality; but what by a stretch of the imagination might it be conceived to be? Was it Jenkinson?—or Smith? There was one turn to begin with, which looked as if it might have been designed to form part of a P; and the moment that discovery was made, the learned counsel for the prosecution turned to the P's in the Law List. Parker?—did it look like Parker? No; it looked more like Pimlico and Son. Phillips?—was it any thing like Phillips? No; the majority then decided against its being a P at all. Well! if not a P, what was it? None of them could tell: nor was it ever intended that any of them should. Some gave it up, declaring with boldness that it was but the gordian knot in a fit; others more obstinate—while even admitting it to be a very strange amalgamation of strokes, felt bound to make it out, and were consequently lost in their own extraordinary conjectures, until the hour for which the trial had been stopped had expired.

Tynte, being naturally anxious to bring the affair to an end, now advised his counsel to show the letter he had received to the counsel for the prosecution. He did so, and when that gentleman had read it, he, swelling with indignation, said "My lord! I consent to the acquittal of the prisoner. I perceive that I have been made a dupe in this affair: the parties clearly never meant to go on with the trial."

A verdict of acquittal was accordingly returned by direction of the Chairman, and Tynte was free.

Previously, however, to his leaving the dock, he instructed his counsel to apply for a copy of the record. This was done ostensibly in order that he might have an opportunity of indicting the prosecutor and witnesses for a conspiracy in getting up so flagrant a charge, but in reality merely for effect. On this application being made, the Chairman, addressing Tynte's counsel, said, "Your client may think himself very well off in being acquitted without requiring a copy of the record." Upon which Tynte, personally addressing the Chairman, pointed out to the manifest impropriety and uncharitableness of such an observation, and referred him to the letter he had received, which was instantly submitted to his perusal.

This letter appeared to have been written by a friend of the assumed second wife, ridiculing the position in which he had been placed, and pointing to it as a proof of the firm determination as well as the power of the writer to annoy him.

Having read this letter, with a feeling of contempt, the Chairman apologized for the observation in which he had indulged, and publicly stated that Tynte left the court without a stain upon his character. He also begged of the reporters present not to do farther injury by giving publicity to his case; and, having thus done all that he could do for him, he bowed as Tynte quitted the court.

The return of George was well timed. He met Tynte coming out, and could not avoid taking him by the hand, although he hated his character; a fact which he had never attempted to conceal.

"You have performed your part nobly," said Tynte; "nothing could have been better arranged. I followed your instructions in every particular; although I did not at first appreciate their value, every point was of so much importance as the trial proceeded, that I have now left the court without a stain upon my character."

"Well, well," said George. "We'll not dwell upon that. I am glad for more reasons than one that you are free; and now that you are, you had better have some slight refreshment, and then we'll call upon Bull to make the business complete."

"I shall not give the whole of that money up!" cried Tynte.

"You *have* given it up!" returned George.

"No, I've not; and I tell you candidly it's of no use to mince the matter, you know—I'll never authorize its payment to her."

"But you have done so!"

"Oh! I know what I'm about well enough, you mustn't flatter yourself that you have a fool to deal with."

"Indeed! Why, Tynte, you are even a greater villain than I imagined you to be!"

"I don't care what you or any other man may imagine! That doesn't at all distress me. I tell you plainly that I'll have that money returned! If it be not, and that at once, I know my course."

"You are a very clever person, Mr. Tynte," said George, calmly, "but your talent, Mr. Tynte, ought to have enabled you to perceive that I am not a man to be trifled with. Threats from a man like you, Mr. Tynte, I hold in the most perfect contempt. Do you imagine for a moment that I would have taken one step in this affair without

having first secured you *firmly*, Mr. Tynte? Could you suppose me to be ignorant of the real character of him with whom I was dealing, or that I should fail to deal with him accordingly. Surely not—but if you did suppose anything so perfectly absurd, you were never more deceived in your life."

"Oh, *I* know my course. You'll not get over me."

"Perhaps not; but I am satisfied of this, that I have bound you, sir, fast!"

A pause ensued, but they still walked on; and as they proceeded, George, knowing the timid character of Bull, thought it better to get the money out of his hands as soon as possible, while Tynte was conceiving a plan by which he might regain possession by force. They were both therefore silent, and continued to be silent until they entered Bull's office.

Fortunately, Bull was within, and having requested them with all his accustomed courtesy to be seated, he became all attention.

"The packet," said George, "which you have in your possession: will you do me the favour to open it and read the contents?"

Bull drew it from the safe and broke the seal, and having looked at the papers enclosed, he inquired if the condition therein stated had been fulfilled.

"It has," replied George

"Then it appears," continued Bull, "I am to hand this four thousand pounds to Helen Grantley. Is it not so?"

"No!" shouted Tynte, who made a dash at the notes; but George, who had anticipated something of the kind, and who had therefore kept his eye fixed upon him, on the instant sprang at his throat, and brought him heavily to the ground.

"Villain!" cried George; "I suspected your object."

"I will have my money!" cried Tynte. "I insist upon having my money!"

Bull stood as if petrified. He could not at all conceive the meaning of it; but George directed him to return the notes at once to the safe, and when that had been accomplished, he suffered Tynte to rise.

"You have read your authority," said George, addressing Bull.

"It is no authority at all," cried Tynte.

"Mr. Bull," said George, "it is an authority, upon which you are bound to act."

"I shall be justified in doing so? Of course I shall be justified?"

"Perfectly! I will indemnify you."

"If *you* say it's correct, I shall deliver it to Helen Grantley."

"Do so at your peril!" exclaimed Tynte.

"Sir!" said Bull, with a firmness at which George was surprised, "quit my office! There's the door, sir! If you don't leave instantly, sir, I'll give you into custody for creating a disturbance."

Tynte now began to rave like a maniac; but finding that Bull was still determined, and that nothing could shake the cool firmness of George, he left the office uttering the vilest threats, and in less than an hour from that time, the four thousand pounds were delivered to Helen.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH GEORGE IS, WITH PECULIAR FACILITY, ARRESTED.

In order that she might not be further annoyed, George strongly advised Helen to quit the house at once; and as this advice met with Bull's ardent approval, she hastily packed up her wardrobe and left, an asylum at George's residence having been offered and accepted with gladness.

As had been anticipated, Tynte arrived in less than an hour after their departure, and on finding that his poor trembling victim had escaped, his rage became almost maniacal, his object having been to regain possession of the four thousand pounds, which object, had Helen failed to follow the advice of George, would in all probability have been accomplished. As it was, he invoked the spirit of vengeance, and during its ascendancy over his mind, he, with a characteristic series of wild imprecations, vowed to be revenged upon both Bull and George.

On reflection, however, his knowledge of George's character prompted him to be cautious. He feared him: he felt well assured that if he were openly to assail him, his arrows would recoil upon himself: still, being firmly bent upon having his revenge, he resolved to annoy if he could not destroy him; and, in order that he might do so effectually in secret, he went to consult his friend Foster, whom he knew to be in practices of secret knavery an adept.

Foster was an envious and, therefore, an unhappy man. He was one of those grovelling, selfish beings whose souls are galled by another's prosperity. He could not bear to see any one of whom he possessed the slightest knowledge successful: it cut him to the heart; and hence, knowing George to be a thriving man,—thriving, too, not by meanly cringing to the vicious and the despicable, but by a strict adherence to manliness and honour, he felt a morbid pleasure in having what he conceived to be the ability to inflict an injury upon him.

"Now, then," said Tynte, having explained all to this most unamiable man, "how is he to be fixed? I am firmly determined to do it, if possible: the only question is, how can it be effectually done?"

"Why, my usual way when a fellow annoys me is to arrest him at once for some decent amount—say for ten thousand pounds, you know, or *so!* You can indict him, if you like; but that is a little more troublesome and expensive; besides, you give him then a greater facility for finding bail and pushing the thing on for trial; whereas, if you arrest him, he'd find it rather difficult, I'm thinking, to procure bail for ten thousand pounds; and if he can't—and I don't believe that *he* can ——why by ruling him on you may keep him in prison for a twelvemonth or *so*."

"The very thing!" exclaimed Tynte; "but is this to be done without my appearing in it?"

"*Most* easily! Bless your life, there's no difficulty in it at all. You have nothing more to do than to get a plaintiff who makes an affidavit, and the writ issues. The thing is like A, B, C."

"But who's to be the plaintiff—how is he to be got?"

"Bless your innocence! And do you mean to say, that you've lived in town all these years without being up to that?"

Tynte confessed that in that peculiar branch of useful knowledge he was unhappily deficient, and having expressed a highly laudable anxiety to be enlightened, Foster instructed him how to proceed.

In the immediate vicinity of Serjeant's Inn there is and has been for more than half a century a dirty, dismal den, held in high repute by a certain class of beings who live by the trade of perjury: for a trade indeed it is, and one, too, which is followed in this metropolis by hundreds. In the parlour of this reputable establishment, at any time between the hours of ten in the morning and twelve at night, a "goodly company" of these creatures may be seen, some drinking, some smoking, and some playing at cribbage, but all waiting anxiously to sell their immortal souls to any one who may require the dreadful sacrifice for a few shillings. They are not to be mistaken: they look like what they are: dead to every just and virtuous feeling, their consciences seem withered with every hope of salvation, and charity would prompt every Christian to pray with the Great Redeemer "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do," but that the knowledge of their character forbids even the hope that of the meaning and import of those awful words, "So help me God!" they are unconscious.

There are places of this description in various parts of London; but to this particular den of iniquity Foster directed Tynte to proceed, having given him full instructions, with a word of introduction to a celebrated attorney, who was a very active candidate himself for transportation, and who was, indeed, so successful in his canvass, that he was soon after duly elected by persons who took special care to prevent his return.

On entering the dismal place in question, Tynte called for a glass of brandy-and-water, while the persons by whom he found himself surrounded looked so earnestly at him, that he felt at once convinced that the object of his visit was well understood by them all. He appeared, however, to take but little notice at first, but stood sipping his brandy-and-water, and carelessly glancing round the room; but having at length caught the eye of an elderly person who had been brooding gloomily with a pipe in his mouth near the fire, he ventured to observe that the air was rather damp.

"It is, very damp," returned the person addressed, taking the pipe from his mouth, and brightening up in an instant, "very damp indeed."

"Will you drink?" said Tynte.

The invitation was no sooner given than the man approached. The subject of the weather was then renewed; but a very few minutes were suffered to elapse before Tynte, in an under tone, inquired if he knew Mr. Foster.

The man nodded in the affirmative; and having looked with great significance, whispered,

"What do you want?"

"An affidavit."

"For what?"

"A debt."

"What amount?"

"Ten thousand pounds."

"Very well. Who's the attorney?"

"Bogers. You know him?"

"Well: when do you want it?"

"In the morning. Will you be there at eleven?"

"To a second."

Tynte then placed a sovereign privately in his hand, ascertained that his name was Draygon, and quitted the house. He then called upon Bogers, and having explained to that virtuous gentleman that he wished to arrest a party, an arrangement was made, as a mere matter of business, for the plaintiff to meet the common-law clerk at eleven in the morning.

At the appointed hour, Draygon the "plaintiff" accordingly went to the office of Mr. Bogers, and saw the clerk in question; and when the affidavit had been duly prepared,—to the effect that "this deponent maketh oath and saith, that defendant is justly and truly indebted unto this deponent in the sum of ten thousand pounds for money lent and advanced by this deponent to the said plaintiff, and at his request"—they proceeded to the King's Bench office in the Temple, and when the plaintiff had solemnly sworn that the contents of the affidavit were true, a writ was issued.

On its being, however, placed in the hands of the sheriff's officer, who knew it to be what is classically termed "a mace," he required the defendant to be pointed out to him, urging, as a reason, that it was so large a sum. Tynte, therefore, accompanied him at once; and having stationed themselves in a passage immediately opposite George's office, they watched for his coming out. They had not been there long before George made his appearance, when Tynte in an instant pointed him out, and disappeared as the officer approached him.

"Mr. Julian it strikes me I've the pleasure to address?" observed the officer respectfully.

"Julian is my name," returned George.

"Mr. George St. George Julian, if I do not mistake."

"You are perfectly correct."

"Then I'm sorry to say, sir, I've a writ here agin yer—a large amount raythor, sir—ten thousand pound!"

"There's some mistake, here;" said George, smiling. "I do not owe ten thousand farthings to any creature breathing."

"Most possible, sir. There's a many of these here things now a going on, sir. Very sorry, sir, but I in course must do my duty."

"But at whose suit is it?"

"Christopher Draygon's the plaintiff, sir."

"Christopher Draygon!—I don't know the man!—I never heard of him before!—However, what's to be done?"

"Sorry, sir; go where you like, sir; either to a lock-up, or White-cross-street, just which you please, sir. But as I des say it's all a mistake, you'd better go to a house. If you'll do me the favour to walk on, sir, I'll keep at a respectable distance."

"No, no;" said George, who by no means approved of the idea of being followed through the city by an officer. "We'll have a coach." And as one unhired happened to be passing at the moment, they hailed it and entered together.

Tynte no sooner saw George thus secured, than he went to the Bank of England, and obtained a two-hundred-pound note for the small ones he had in his possession, and having cut it in half proceeded at once to Bull's office.

As he entered, Bull looked at him fiercely, although he felt somewhat tremulous, expecting that of course he had called in order to tell him exactly what he thought of his conduct in giving up the four thousand pounds.

Tynte, however, bowed with great humility, and having assumed an extremely penitential aspect, said, with a meekness which was very appropriate, "Mr. Bull, I have taken the liberty of calling to offer a thousand apologies. I am, indeed, truly sorry that I should have suffered passion to blind my judgment so far as to induce me to commit myself so grossly."

"I am glad, sir," said Bull, who felt greatly relieved; for he had felt, up to that very moment, apprehensive that Tynte intended to commence proceedings against him; "I am glad, sir, that on reflection you feel that you were wrong"

"I *was* wrong, sir; very, very wrong, and I now ask your pardon. I beg of you to believe, sir, that had I been cool, or even in my senses, I would not have offended you for the world."

"I am satisfied, sir—quite satisfied, and I hope that you are equally satisfied that I acted correctly."

"I am, sir; I am convinced that, as an honest, upright man, you could not have acted otherwise; indeed, it would have been, I feel, totally inconsistent with the reputation you have acquired for straightforwardness and honour."

Bull was considerably softened by this compliment, and as it met with the approbation of his own heart, he acknowledged it duly.

"But, sir," continued Tynte, "you are aware—I am certain that a man of your experience and knowledge of the world cannot but be aware, that this matter, by taking from me almost all I possessed, has embarrassed me sadly; I have, therefore, as a mere matter of business on your part, and without the slightest risk or inconvenience, to ask you a favour."

Bull instinctively thrust his hands into his pockets, and inquired with a very droll expression of countenance, how he could serve him.

"I have," replied Tynte, "just received from a friend of mine in

Gloucester, the half of a two-hundred-pound Bank of England note: the other half will follow, of course, as soon as the receipt of this has been acknowledged; but I am just now terribly pushed, Mr. Bull, I expect indeed to be arrested every hour; and although I might induce the attorney to wait perhaps, by lodging the half-note with him, I don't like to trust it in his hands, Mr. Bull, for as a man of the world, you know what these lawyers are."

The thought at this moment flashed across Bull's mind, that if this were a genuine note, he might make a few pounds by affording the accommodation; and as the practice of cashing half-notes was by no means unusual, he really did feel that he might just as well make a profit by the transaction as any one else. He therefore replied, "Very true, I *do* know what lawyers are, sir: I've had enough to do with them in my time, I have. Let me see the note; I'll do what I can for you, I will; but money is very valuable just now, Mr. Tynte!—this is settling day; the account's a bear account, sir; the differences are very, very heavy, they are; the exchanges all against us; but I'll manage it for you, nevertheless, if I can. Be good enough to amuse yourself a moment with the paper; I'll just go and see how I stand."

Taking the half-note with him, he ran in great haste to the Bank in order to ascertain if it were genuine, and on being assured that it was, he as hastily returned.

"I am sorry," said he, "I can't oblige you, Mr. Tynte. I find that I have drawn very close, sir; too close; much closer indeed than I ever dreamt of."

"But have you no friend," urged Tynte, "who would do a little thing of this kind? I would pay him, sir, for the accommodation willingly!"

Bull, who had anticipated this application, replied, "Why, I can't say that I don't know a friend who would do it. But he's a covetous man, sir!—money's scarce, and he knows it!—a very covetous man, and I don't like to lay myself under the obligation."

"Let it be a matter of business, Mr. Bull. Don't make an obligation of it. I'll pay him—anything in reason."

"But I'm afraid he'll not be satisfied with anything in reason. He's such a Jew, he is. However, as it will be of so much service, I'll go, I will, and hear what he says. How much shall I offer?"

"Oh, I'll leave it to you: you'll do the best you can for me, I know."

Bull promised to do so and left him; ostensibly in order to consult this dear friend; but in reality with the view of thinking how he could secure the direct receipt of the other half-note.

Having hit upon what he conceived to be an excellent plan, he returned with a most dismal face. Tynte, however, who understood all this well, was by no means dismayed, although assuming an expression of the most intense anxiety, he enquired with great earnestness whether he had been successful.

"I have seen him," replied Bull, shaking his head mournfully. "Just what I expected, exorbitant! Avarice—avarice is the curse of

life, it is. It amazes me how men can be so grasping. I'd strongly recommend you to wait until the other half arrives."

"Impossible! I cannot wait. What does your friend require?"

"I don't like to tell you. Nor do I like to have any hand in such a vilely usurious transaction. I'd rather you waited: it's only a couple of days!"

"Once more, my friend, I cannot wait. I *must* make the sacrifice: what is it?"

"Why, would you believe that he wants ten pounds! Did you ever see the like of people?—*I* never did."

"It cannot be helped, Mr. Bull; he must have ten pounds."

"Why, it's a thousand per cent.! That's the way money's made, sir, in these days: a thousand per cent. per annum!"

"I am aware of it, sir, but I must submit."

"Well," returned Bull, who began to be rather angry with himself, for he now felt that he might just as well have asked twenty as ten. "I only know, sir, that I wouldn't make such a sacrifice. I call it a robbery, I do. But if you must have the money, why you must. I'll go and get it."

"I am ashamed, sir, to give you so much trouble," said Tynte.

"Don't name it. In serving a friend I feel pleasure."

He then went direct to his banker's, drew a cheque for the amount, and returned with the money, determined however not to hand it over until that had been done which he imagined would secure him against all risk.

"Well, I've got it, sir," said he on his return; "but only, only on one condition, for he's a very suspicious fellow, he is. For my part I can't bear to see people so suspicious."

"What is the condition?"

"Why, that you write to acknowledge the receipt of the half-note, and to request your correspondent to send the other by return addressed to you at my office, and give me an authority in writing to open the letter on its arrival, and to hand the contents to my friend."

"Most certainly. I can have no objection to that. He's a clever fellow though!" he added, smiling, "whoever he may be, he's a sharp shrewd dog!"

"He is," returned Bull, who really thought that he was. "He knows a little: as much perhaps as here and there one. There's no getting over *him*."

Mr. Tynte was quite pleased with this remarkable observation, and occasionally smiled while writing the letter, which he delivered when finished to Bull with the authority, received the money, and left.

While Bull, however, was rubbing his knees, chuckling at the excessively artful way in which he had made the ten pounds, and congratulating himself upon his unexampled cleverness, he received a note from George, which made him tremble, for it informed him not only of the arrest, but of the suspicion which George entertained of its having been done through the instrumentality of Tynte. He therefore lost not

a moment in starting for Chancery-lane, from which the note had been dated; nay, so dreadfully alarmed had he become, that he actually called a coach, and had moreover the unprecedented generosity to tell the driver that he would give him an additional sixpence to make his horses gallop all the way.

The coachman in consequence of this did his best, and having done so, demanded a shilling more than his fare, besides insisting resolutely upon having the promised sixpence. It was well for him that Bull was not in haste alone, but also in a state of agitation: as it was, however, he paid him, with a promise to have him up for extortion, and having taken his number, which he did not retain in his memory a moment, he entered the house with a dirty individual who had two pots of porter in one hand, and a singularly coarse beef-steak in the other.

"Mr. Julian I believe is here," said Bull to the person in attendance.

"First to the left," said that person, unlocking a door, surmounted with spikes, at the foot of the stairs.

Bull ascended, and having knocked at the first door on the right, entered a room, which was crowded with all sorts of persons, the whole of whom looked at him in an instant, but the next instant turned with an expression of disappointment, he not being the man whom any one of them expected.

"Mr. Julian?" said he, looking round; but as it suddenly occurred to him that this was not the first to the left, he rectified his error, and found George alone.

"Dear, bless me!" he exclaimed, as he entered the room. "Why, my dear boy, why—what is all this? What's it for? What's the amount?"

"*Only* ten thousand pounds," replied George, with a smile.

"Ten *thousand!*" cried Bull, starting back as if struck. "Why—why—*ten* thousand!—Lord have mercy upon us! Dear, bless my life, I'd not the slightest notion of your being in *so* deep!"

"Nor had I until this morning: I assure you it rather surprised *me!*"

"But what have you been doing to owe so much money?"

"I don't owe a shilling of it! not a single shilling!"

"But how can that be, my boy? How can they arrest you for a debt you don't owe? It's illegal, it is: it can't be! In a land of liberty like this!—a Christian country!—a country with laws—"

"Which afford no protection," added George, "save to those by whom they are violated—laws, sir, which scourge the unfortunate man while they shield the accomplished villain."

"But how can it be? How can they answer to arrest a man who don't owe a farthing? I believe you, of course, my dear boy, because I know you wouldn't deceive me; but I don't understand it, I don't! Who's the creditor?—the man at whose suit the writ issued?"

"His name, it appears, is Christopher Draygon."

"Draygon—Draygon—Draygon—who's Draygon?"

"I can't tell indeed, I never heard of the name before."

"Never heard of him!—never had any transaction with him!—where does he live? *I'll* see into it!—I'll see after him!—I'll Draygon him, I will!—only just let me know where he lives."

"This is the address; I sent a man at once down to the office to look at the affidavit; but I don't expect you'll find him."

"Not find him? I'll find him. He shan't escape me."

"If you should see him, just bring him here," said George: "persuade him to come with you."

"Persuade him!—he shall come! I'll collar him. Keep up your spirits, my dear boy: I'll see it all right. I shall soon be back: it isn't far: only in Fetter-lane:—keep up your spirits."

Having been assured by George that he was not at all depressed, he started for the residence of Christopher Draygon, which he found to be a filthy, loathsome place, the lower part of which was kept by a dealer in old iron, rags, and bones.

"Does a Mr. Christopher Draygon live here?" inquired Bull, having entered the shop.

"Yes, sir," replied a person, whose face and arms were protected from the inclemency of the weather by a thick coat of rust and grease commingled.

"Can I see him, pray? Is he within?"

"No; he's never at home, on'y at night, sir. We don't scarce see nothing at all of him."

"What is he, pray?"

"Don't know nothing at all about him. I on'y know he goes out in the morning and comes home at night."

"Is he a rich man?"

"Rich!" echoed the dirty individual, tossing his head contemptuously; "rich! God pity him! I on'y wish he was; he wouldn't then be so back'ard in coming forrard with his rent."

"What is the best time to catch him at home, my friend? I want to see him on very particular business indeed."

"Oh, you *want* to see him? Ah, then there ain't one half a chance. If you didn't want to see him you might catch him by a miracle, if you've luck; but as you do want to see him, I can't give you *no* sort of hopes: he's as slippery as a live silver eel."

"Then there's no chance of seeing him?"

"*Not* half a ha'porth! He never sees nobody; 'specially if any body's arter him. I never see sich a fish! I'm sure the gen'elmen as calls, is astonishing: but no, he won't see them, the eternal fool; for sich connections, in course, might do something for him. It's pride, o' my thinking: for rayther than put hisself hunder a obligation, he goes on and on here as poor as a bug."

"Is he a lawyer, or in any way connected with the law?"

"Heaven and earth only knows what he is, or what he does. I can't make him out, and never could."

"Well, I'm obliged to you for the information. Good day."

As the eyes of Mr. Bull now began to be opened; as he pretty

clearly saw that this was in reality a most villanous transaction, he called upon an attorney whom he knew, and who walked to the lock-up-house with him.

As they entered the room which was occupied by George, he looked at the attorney with an expression indicative of something like a desire to annihilate him without any unnecessary loss of time, conceiving that, of course, he was no other person than the veritable Christopher Draygon, Gent. On being undeceived, however, his countenance changed, and they entered calmly into the question of what was to to be done.

"This is not by any means," said the attorney, "an uncommon occurrence, although it appears to be, and is in reality, monstrous. My only wonder is, that they did not proceed a little farther, and have a couple of affidavits and a couple of plaintiffs, in order that the difficulty might thereby be doubled. However, as it is, there is nothing to be done but to find good bail."

"The amount is so large!" said George.

"True: it is, indeed, a large amount; but as the matter is certain to come to nothing, Mr. Bull, I should say, might with ease find an equally responsible person to join him."

This rather startled Bull. The idea of becoming bail for so large a sum as ten thousand pounds, had a powerful effect upon his nerves. He did not, however, see how he could refuse, and was therefore quite silent.

"But surely," said George, who had watched Bull intently, and knew pretty well what was passing in his mind, "surely a judge, sir, would order my discharge upon finding nominal bail, or a strong affidavit of the *facts?*"

"That has been tried," replied the attorney, "again and again. The judge assumes to have no such power. His argument is, that if he could discharge on the plea of not owing the money, in a case for five or ten thousand pounds, he could do it for twenty pounds, or any other sum. He would thus have all the *trying*; and if that were once established, he would have as many cases as if he were invested with the power of unmarrying the married. Bail, sir, must be found, or you'll have to lie in a prison, sir, for twelve or eighteen months; for, of course, they'll rule you on."

"But can't we punish the knaves?" inquired Bull. "Is there no sort of remedy?"

"Remedy? Oh, yes! of course, there's a remedy! It's a free Briton's proudest boast that there can be no wrong without a remedy! For example, you bring your action for a malicious arrest, and what do you get? Why, after going on for perhaps a year and a half you get a verdict, and that's about all that you do get. Where's the defendant? He's not to be found. His name is Christopher Draygon, and he lived at a marine store-shop in Fetter Lane once, but where is he now? Who can tell? You *can't* find him!—and if even you can, what then? —what is he? A beggar! Still there's no wrong without a remedy! Bail, sir, must be had: nothing else can be done."

"It's a monstrous sum of money," observed Bull, "is ten thousand pounds!"

"Yes, but then it isn't like a real debt," said the attorney. "*You'd* have no difficulty at all, you know, in getting a friend to join you in such a case as this."

"I don't know: people don't like to do it, they don't.

"You can get it done: there's no doubt about that. The only question is, have you sufficient confidence in Mr. Julian?"

"I have every confidence in him, I have. I don't believe he'd do anything wrong for the world."

"There is nothing to induce him to do so in this case; he has no temptation to fix his bail."

"I see that, I do; I see it clearly. Well! I'll go at once and do what I can."

"I only want to get out," said George, who had for some time been pacing the room in silence, "and I'll undertake to relieve you of all responsibility within a week."

"My dear boy, I've the most perfect confidence in you. It shall be done. I promise you, I'll do it without delay."

This promise was faithfully performed; and as the officer was perfectly satisfied with the bail on receiving a liberal fee, George was liberated in the course of a few hours.

"Now," said Bull, when this had been accomplished, "as you strongly suspect that man Tynte, I'll tell you what I did this morning."

He then entered into a full explanation of all that had occurred, and when he had finished, George exclaimed, "I'm glad of it!"

"Glad!" cried Bull in a state of amazement.

"Glad," replied George. "And I hope that it will turn out as I fully expect it will, that he has got some one else, sir, to cash the other half."

"What that I may be swindled out of two hundred pounds?"

"Oh we shall find out who has got the other half, and when we do, sir, we'll fix him."

"Fix him! I'll punish him, I will, with the utmost rigour of the law! A scoundrel like that to come and swindle people out of their substance! I'll have him up before the Lord Mayor! I'll have him transported, I will! Coming to *me* with his rag, and getting a hundred and ninety pounds here out of me! Hanging's too good for such a fellow."

"I expect you got the worst of it!"

"The worst of it! Who'd have thought it possible? Coming to me as he did here, with a face as long as my arm and begging my pardon, and hoping I'd forgive him, and all for the purpose of taking me in! The scoundrel! *I'd* have forgiven him if I'd only known it. I'd have kicked him out of the office as clean as a whistle. I'd have strangled him, I would. Is a fellow like that fit to live upon the face of the earth? *I'll* trounce him! I'll teach him to come with his bits of rags to me! Why he ought to be brought to the stake, he ought! Plundering people like that!"

"Have you posted the letter to Gloucester?"

"Oh, it's gone. The scoundrel! I put it in myself to make sure."

"Well, then we shall soon see how the case stands. If it be as I anticipate, I'll, in the first place, release you from all responsibility on my account, and then with arguments which shall not fail, I'll convince him of the expediency, not only of making restitution, but of never even attempting to annoy either of us in any way again."

"Frighten him into fits, my dear boy! make him feel as if he hadn't a head on."

"I'll manage him. Leave him to me."

"But did you ever hear of such a blackguard! It's enough to make a man hit his mother. I shall always look with an eye of suspicion, I shall, upon [illegible]m who pulls a long face and comes to beg pardon. I feel so mad, my dear boy, at being bit in this barefaced way, I don't know how to contain myself, I don't. I'm fit to bite my own nose off!"

And it is a striking fact, that as he did not believe himself then to be quite so clever as he had imagined himself to be, he was humiliated even in his own estimation.

CHAPTER IX.

THE POTATO SPECULATION.

As George had anticipated, so it occurred; no such person as the one to whom the letter had been addressed, was known at Gloucester; while Tynte, hearing that George was most anxious to meet with him, wisely kept out of the way. He could nowhere be found; the whole of his associates were applied to in vain, not one of them had seen him, but they all had to propose highly lucrative schemes, in which they hoped that he would join them, but to which he refused even to listen for a moment.

On calling, however, upon Wese to ascertain if *he* knew of Tynte's retreat, he was replied to in a manner so solemn, and under circumstances so extraordinary, that he consented to give his best attention to the matter, and to advise him, when he had heard the particulars, how to act, which so delighted the Immortal Peter, that he seized his hand and shook it with an expression of joy.

"I have conceived, sir," said he, assuming a most important aspect, on becoming somewhat tranquil, "I have conceived, sir, a project, an original project, which, if well carried out, sir, cannot fail to make our fortunes at once; and what is more, it's on the square, sir,—strictly on the square."

"Well!" said George, who was certainly rather curious to know what sort of scheme *he* had the power to conceive, for it must be confessed that he had been taken by surprise, inasmuch as he had never

even entertained the notion that Peter had been on any occasion blessed with an idea which could lay claim to any thing bearing the semblance of originality. "Well—what is it?"

"Sir;" replied Peter, "I'll tell you; and you are the only man in the world whom I would tell. I haven't named it to a single soul; I have kept it, sir, within my own breast. Not that I'm afraid of people acting upon the idea, because they couldn't carry it out, sir; were they to make the attempt, they would only spoil it. No, sir, the thing must be done by us, we alone can manage it; you and I sir are the only men!"

George smiled, but seemed to be anxious for him to come to the point.

"In the first place, sir," continued Peter, "we must get a patent for it; we must secure it to ourselves; and they can't refuse to grant us a patent—that's perfectly impossible."

"But what is it?" said George, impatiently.

"Sir," replied Peter, who was in no sort of haste; "it is a thing, sir, which will yield a profit, sir, of one thousand six hundred per cent. Look at that!—sixteen hundred per cent.!"

"That is rather a large profit," observed George.

"Sir, it is a large profit; but it is to be done, and what is more, sir, done with ease!"

"I am impatient to know what it is! It must be something very important, I should think?"

"It is, sir, of universal importance. I've got the prospectus drawn out, and all the preliminaries arranged; I've been working hard at it, sir: every thing is ready, and I mean, sir, to call it THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN ASSOCIATION FOR THE RENOVATION OF WHITE KID GLOVES!"

"For the renovation of what!" exclaimed George, laughing heartily.

"White kid gloves," replied Peter, with a solemn expression, wondering what on earth could have made George merry: "don't you think it a capital idea?"

"Oh, excellent!—but how do you mean to proceed?"

"Why, in the first place, sir, we must take a magnificent office; appoint a banker, a solicitor, and so on; issue prospectuses—I've got a flamer, ready—capital fifty thousand pounds, in five hundred shares of a hundred pounds each; it's of no use commencing with less than fifty thousand."

"No; I should say that that is about the smallest capital you ought to commence with to do any good. But how do you renovate gloves? and how can sixteen hundred per cent be obtained?"

"I'll explain—but in the strictest confidence!"

"Of course!"

"Well, sir, then I have made the discovery, that by dipping a piece of flannel in the spirit of turpentine, and rubbing it over the gloves, every species of dirt in an instant disappears; when, by washing them well in cold water, and letting them gradually dry, you restore them to

their pristine beauty; you make them, sir, just as good as new, without the shape being altered, or the stitches destroyed. Very well; now, two pair of white-kid gloves, sir, can be cleaned at the cost of one farthing; half a farthing's-worth of turpentine being sufficient to clean each pair—charge four-pence per pair for their renovation, and that gives you a profit at once of one thousand six hundred per cent."

"Well, certainly nothing can be clearer than that. But why do you propose to call it the British and *Foreign* Association?"

"Because most of the kid-gloves worn, sir, are foreigners. Those buff ones are Frenchmen, you have on. I can tell them in a moment. Now I suppose you gave half-a-crown for these?"

"That I believe was the price."

"Very well, then; just look at the case as it stands. When they are soiled, and they soon are, you can't wear them; you buy another pair, and have to give another half-crown: whereas, if you had them renovated for the small charge of fourpence, you would save within a fraction of four hundred per cent. So that you see the importance of the scheme is so general and so vast, that I have not the slightest doubt that we shall realize at least twenty thousand a year."

"Certainly not less than that," said George drily.

"No; I don't see how we can. And then, you know, we'll have the whole of the workmen solemnly sworn to secrecy."

"Yes, that I should say will be very essential. How many pair of white-kid gloves are purchased every year?"

"How many?"—cried Peter—"can't tell."

"Oh, that of course must be got for the prospectus. Show that:—get the average for the last ten years, and then you know we'll talk about the patent."

This rather puzzled Peter. But he promised promptly to get at it: oh, he could do it—nay he *would*!—and when George had left, he began to consider *how*, without suspecting for a moment that George had not been much struck with either the excellence or the practicability of the project.

Now, as at this particular period the revenue was being constantly defrauded to a considerable extent in the department of stamps; as the process by which it was effected had become well known to him, and as he had for some time made the means by which it could be effectually prevented his study, George, wishing to do something which might place him in a better position before Mc Gregor returned from Poyais, wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer soliciting an interview, and stating the object proposed.

As a brief explanation of the mode in which this species of fraud was accomplished may be held to be necessary, it will be proper here to state that by a chemical process the ink was discharged from old stamps which (the stamps themselves, of course, being perfectly uninjured) were sold again as new. This system was carried to an immense extent then, and has been practised ever since. It is indeed an indisputable fact, that the articles of a great proportion of the Jew attorneys, at present practising in London, were engrossed upon old stamps purloined from the

Master's-office in the Temple. But the loss to the revenue was not all; the public suffered by the system to a ruinous extent: and as names and dates could be removed from any instrument with the utmost facility, it may be readily conceived that if the system were carried to the extent to which it might be carried, commercial credit in this or any other country would be utterly destroyed. George would undertake to discharge any portion of the writing on a bill of exchange, a cheque, a will, or, in fact, any other kind of instrument; and it was with the view of checking the knaves by whom it was fraudulently practised that he sought and eventually discovered the means of rendering it impossible.

His letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer was well received and an early interview promised. Indeed, the answer returned was of a character so favourable, that George went in search of premises adapted to the manufacture of paper, having explained in his letter to the Chancellor that in consideration of the public service rendered he should expect to have the contract for the supply of all the paper to be used for stamps in the United Kingdom, it being only from a peculiarly manufactured paper that ink could not be discharged.

While looking out for premises suitable for this purpose in the vicinity of London he happened to hear that an extremely clever person, named Colman, who had at the time the temporary management of a slate quarry, near Plymouth, and who had for years been engaged in the manufacture of paper, was the very man to whom he ought at once to apply, and who would be happy to give him whatever information on the subject he might require.

Without waiting for a second communication from the Chancellor, he therefore started for Plymouth, and had several interviews with Colman, whom he found to be a highly intelligent man, and withal so exceedingly active that he promised to give him a liberal engagement in the event of his succeeding in the object he had in view, and moreover offered—as an immediate return for the politeness with which he had been received—to take his nephew with him to London, and to place him in a situation, which offer was gladly accepted, the young man being exceedingly poor, although fairly entitled to considerable property, to which, however, he had been unable to establish his claim.

The object of his visit having thus been satisfactorily attained, he proposed to leave Plymouth on the following day; but as, in the course of the evening, he happened to hear at the inn at which he had taken up his quarters that three persons had just arrived from town with the view of buying up all the potatoes, a scarcity being anticipated, he inquired farther into the matter, and having ascertained that potatoes were then extremely cheap, and that the prospect of their becoming extremely dear was not very remote, he thought that he might just as well enter into a little potato speculation *himself*, be being then within a few miles of the place from which the great London market was to a very considerable extent supplied.

After weighing the matter for some time, and hearing all the landlord wished to impart—and that person was exceedingly eloquent while

describing the fortunes that had been made by potato speculations—George went at once to Colman, and on finding that he knew the majority of the growers, through whom he could easily get at the rest, he determined upon starting the next morning early, with the view of buying up all that were to be had, and then selling them to those merchants who had gone down in order to do the same thing; but who, lest it should be thought that they *wanted* the potatoes, intended to wait till market day.

Early the next morning he accordingly started, accompanied by his protégé Frederick Broadbridge, and soon found himself in the midst of a singularly uncouth set of people, with whom he discovered that in order to do any good, he must eat and drink enough at least for six.

These people complained bitterly of London merchants in the aggregate, who, in consequence of there having been no competition, had for years been in the habit of giving them what price they pleased, and declared that the result of this monopoly had heen to make potatoes scarcely worth growing at all, and that they supposed—as the price got less every year—that the time was not very far distant when the merchants would expect them to give them for nothing, send them home, pay the freight, and then peel them.

George explained to them all that he was connected with no monopoly, that he wished to purchase solely on his own account; and having set forth clearly the advantages which they themselves would derive from competition, he became so great a favourite with them and their wives, that they vowed they would rather let him have them at two shillings per bag, than they would sell them to the monopolists at two and twopence. George, however, insisted upon giving them two and threepence, which made him their idol at once, for they believed—and it was in reality the fact—that he wished to take no advantage of them, and therefore, could he have eaten enough for five and twenty giants, they would have been all the better pleased.

Having passed nearly two days amongst them, he succeeded in purchasing ten thousand bags at the price he had fixed, and when they had assured him that in putting them up they would do him justice—which he felt convinced they would do—he took a hearty leave of them, their wives, and daughters, and returned with his compani)n to the inn.

On the morrow, being market-day, the monopolists made their appearance, and of course treated the farmers, as usual, cavalierly. *They* didn't want potatoes!—not they. Potatoes were a drug in the market already; but they wouldn't mind taking them off their hands at a price!

The farmers enjoyed this amazingly, and chuckled at the idea—and be it known that a Cornish farmer can chuckle when he likes, and that in a style too, which no other farmer can match—but when they informed the monopolists that they had been thus forestalled, it was found that those monopolists *did* want potatoes, and that very much: indeed, so much, that in the course of a few hours, the price rose to three shillings and sixpence per bag.

While George was deliberating whether to sell them to the monopolists there or in London, he saw a placard announcing the sale of a small brig, under a commission of bankruptcy; and as the freight from thence to London was one pound per ton, it occurred to him that if he could purchase her on easy terms, he might make a considerable sum by the joint speculation, besides having her in the event of a vessel being required—which he fully expected—to sail for Poyais.

Having spoken to Colman on the subject, he was introduced by him to several masters of vessels, from whom he learned that the brig came last from the Cape with a cargo of wine; that she had put into Plymouth in distress; that soon after her arrival, her owner in London had become bankrupt; that her cargo had been landed, that the vessel and stores only were for sale; and that their opinion was, that although she would be cheap at a thousand pounds, she would fetch but five or six hundred.

In consequence of this, George attended the sale which took place on the following day, having previously gone on board with a person in whose judgment Colman had informed him he could place the utmost confidence.

The brig was put up at three hundred pounds, and after various biddings reached four hundred guineas. The broker then, to gain time and to secure thereby a better price, gave a history of the vessel: He stated that she was Spanish built, had formerly been employed in the packet service, was a very fast sailer, had been afterwards employed in the slave trade, had been captured on the coast of Africa for acts of piracy, after having been fired into and her commander killed; that she was sent into Mozambique, condemned, put up for sale, purchased by a merchant residing at the Cape for himself and partner, taken round to that settlement, loaded with wine, despatched for England, encountered bad weather in the Channel and put into Plymouth in distress; and that he marvelled greatly that after all this no more than four hundred guineas should be offered.

The immediate effect of this was very powerful: the bidding again went on until it reached four hundred and eighty pounds, when the broker again paused, but on discovering that he had nothing more to say about the brig, he inquired for the last time if there was any advance on four hundred and eighty pounds; when George bid five hundred and the hammer went down.

George having prepared himself for this, paid twenty-five per cent of the purchase-money then, with the understanding that the rest was to be paid within a week. An inventory of the stores was then handed to him together with her register and other papers, and he congratulated himself upon having made the purchase, and with reason, inasmuch as, deducting the freight of his potatoes, the cost of the vessel could not exceed two hundred pounds.

On going on board the following day to look over the stores with the broker, to whom he entrusted the fitting-out of the vessel, and the appointment of the master and crew, he observed a number of peculiarly-

formed cheeses, and having tasted one or two of them, he determined to take home half-a-dozen to Julia. They were accordingly packed up, and when he had given full instructions to the broker and to Frederick, whom he left to look after the potatoes in his absence, he started for town with his cheeses.

On his arrival, he proceeded directly home, and was received with joy by both Julia and Helen. He had never been absent from Julia before, and her delight at seeing him, and that moreover looking *so* well, may be conceived—but by those alone who know what a *god* an affectionate husband is in the eyes of an amiable woman.

During the evening he entertained them with an amusing relation of all that had occurred, explaining to them how completely he had lost his heart among the wives and daughters of the Cornish farmers, and giving them a graphic description of their peculiar characteristics. But that which Julia held to be more wonderful than all was, the idea of his having absolutely purchased a vessel! Oh! how she did long for its arrival in the river! for she had already made up her mind that it *must* be something like a seventy-four—dear! how she should enjoy going on board while the streamers were waving and the sailors were running up the masts; and then the cabin!—to dine in a sweet little cabin, how extremely delightful it must be!

George smiled at the rapture expressed, and then spoke of the cheeses, which they only wished to *see*; and when one was produced they then only wished to taste, being perfectly sure that anything coming from *the* vessel must indeed be delicious.

The tray was accordingly ordered, and when Julia, Helen, and Jane had seated themselves at the table, George proceeded to perforate the top of the cheese. On piercing the rind, however, he found that his knife came in contact with something which certainly was not *cheese*! Stimulated thereby to further exertions, he made a circle in the centre, and on raising the piece discovered a tin case embedded! The top of the case was off in an instant, and he drew forth a roll of bank-notes, both English and Foreign, with a number of papers written in a variety of languages.

The surprise expressed by them all was of course unbounded. "Let *me* count the notes," cried Julia: and while she was engaged in that pleasing occupation, George was examining the papers.

The history which the broker had given of the brig then occurred to him. She had been captured for acts of piracy: these were false papers with which she had sailed!—the commander had been killed when the brig was fired into;—those notes then were the property he had amassed and placed there for security. These inferences were natural: nothing could be more so. It was no uncommon thing, during war, for even English trading vessels to sail with false papers; nor was it unusual for the money on board to be ingeniously concealed; it was therefore clear to George that he was correct in his conjectures.

"Well," said he, having satisfied himself on this point "and how much do you make of them?"

"Can't tell exactly, yet," replied Julia. "Here are several queer-looking foreign affairs, which we cannot at all understand."

George looked at them; and having made the necessary calculations, found that the value of the whole exceeded two thousand pounds.

"Now, my dear George," exclaimed Julia, "we'll examine all the others!—we'll have them all up. Every cheese may contain the same sum: there's no telling."

"I fear we shall find no more," returned George, with a smile.

"But we *may*, you know, my dear.—Who knows?—Suppose we try?"

"Oh, by all means! Order the rest up."

They were accordingly produced, and George duly pierced them all; but although nothing more was discovered, he was perfectly satisfied: for as, according to his lowest calculation, he should clear an additional thousand, he might even then be said to have realised three thousand pounds by his trip.

CHAPTER X.

TREATS OF VARIOUS MATTERS OF IMPORTANCE TO ALL CONCERNED

JULIA had been so overjoyed the previous evening, that she had totally forgotten to tell George until the morning, that, in consequence of his prolonged absence, Bull had been in a state of anxiety the most feverish and intense.

"Forgive me, dear," she exclaimed, "for neglecting to tell you before; but oh, he has been in *such* a way!—you cannot conceive what a fidget he has been in."

"Has he called very often?"

"He has been constantly calling; and asking such very droll questions!—Have you any idea of going abroad?"

"Going abroad, my love!—No. What induced you to think of that?"

"Oh, only because he wished most particularly to know if I had ever heard you say that you meant to go abroad."

It now became manifest to George, that, notwithstanding the "unbounded confidence" Bull professed to have in his honour, he had been dreadfully apprehensive of his having intended to commit the most odious breach of confidence of which a man can be guilty—namely, that of fixing his bail.

He, therefore, on leaving home, started direct to Bull's office, and the affectionate ecstacy with which he was greeted surpassed every species

of rapture he ever witnessed before. Bull flew to him as he entered, and seized both his hands, and shook them with a warmth which might have conveyed to a purely unsophisticated mind an idea of the most ardent friendship.

"My dear boy!" he exclaimed. "My dear boy!—you don't know, you don't, how glad I am to see you!"

"Yes, I think I do," said George drily.

"Well? And what have you done? What success have you had? Have you sold your potatoes, my boy?—have you sold your potatoes? Ah, you ought to have let me into that. I'd have sent you down money; any sum you might have wanted, I would. Mrs. Julian told me all about it; and you don't know how pleased I was to hear the good news."

"I have to thank you," observed George, "for calling so frequently upon Mrs. Julian; it was very polite of you, very."

"Don't name it, don't name it!" said Bull as his countenance underwent a rather sudden change. "Oh, don't name it!"

"Of course you began to imagine I had run from my bail?"

"My dear boy, how came you to think of such a thing! How is it possible I *could* entertain such a notion? You know me better than that, you do; you *know*, you know me better. But now, how about the potatoes?"

George proceeded to explain to him all that had happened from the time he had left town until he opened the cheese; but before he had perfectly finished the history, Bull was informed that a person wished to see him on very particular business indeed. George, therefore, rose at once, but Bull begged of him to remain, and proceeded to the outer office. He had, however, scarcely been absent two minutes before he returned with an elderly Jew, whom he slightly introduced as Mr. Isaacs.

"Will you be kind enough to state what you wish to explain to this gentleman," said Bull, addressing Isaacs. "He knows all about the transaction."

"Vy," returned the Jew, "arl I vantsh to exhplain, Mishter Pull, ish ash thish, that I've cot arf a note, I advanched a hundred and fifty poundsh on, and vantsh for to get the other."

"How came you to think of applying to Mr. Bull?" inquired George.

"Pecaush I heard Mishter Pull resheived the other veshterday, and ash an honesht man, vood give it up on application."

"Are you aware," said George, "that Mr. Bull advanced a hundred and ninety pounds upon the other half-note?"

"A hundred and ninety poundsh!" exclaimed Isaacs. "Vot, then, are ve shwindled? The schoundrel! I'll have him transhported! Mishter Pull, vill you go vit me to take out a varrant? Vill you join me?"

"Willingly!" cried Bull, "I'll do anything, I will, to get him sent out of the country."

"That'sh right, Mishter Pull!—that'sh right, ma friend. If any man ought to be shent out of the country, it'sh that shwindling schamp. And yet vatsh the ushe after arl, Mishter Pull?—vat'sh the ushe? You

know vat he ish, the schoundrel. Don't you think, Mishter Pull, vee'd petter shettle it petveen us? If ve shend him out of the country, ve shall have to do that. It'sh petter to make the pesht of a pad job at vonsh. Shupposh ve shettle it: vill you puy mine, or shall I puy oursh?"

"Oh, ho! I perceive!" thought George.

"Vat shay you, Mishter Pull? You know it musht come to that!—and moneysh ish very short vit me just now."

"Do the numbers correspond?" inquired George.

"Yesh av coursh they correshpond!"

"How do you know?"

"Here it ish!" replied Isaacs, showing his half, but holding it with both hands tightly.

George looked at it, and when Bull produced his, he found that the numbers did correspond.

"And when did you see this man last?" he inquired.

"The day pefore yeshterday morning."

"Have you known him long?"

"Not sho very long. Put I've known him long enough now to know he'sh a shwindler."

"Have you any objection to sign this paper?" said George, writing.

"Vatsh it apout?"

"It is simply a declaration that you received the half-note which you now hold from Tynte, and that you advanced a sum of money—that is to say, a hundred and fifty pounds upon it."

"No, I never putsh ma hand to papersh."

"You will sign it, Mr. Isaacs, if you are an honest man."

"I am an honesht man, put I vill not shighn. Itsh a pad practish that ish of putting nameshto papersh."

"Then I see how it is," said George, "clearly. You will probably be good enough to tell Mr. Tynte, whom you will see, I have no doubt, soon after you leave here, that Mr. Bull, by the advice of Mr. Julian, will not consent to place him in a better position than that in which he now stands; that if he be desirous of remaining in this country he will call upon Mr. Julian, or at least appoint a time for having an interview with him forthwith; and that unless Mr. Julian shall receive such an appointment within three days, he may abandon every hope of being able to make any arrangement, for nothing shall induce Mr. Julian after that to consent to his escape from transportation."

"But you don't shupposh for a moment that I'm in league vit him, I hope?"

"I should say that which is false were I to say that I do not. I *do* suppose it, Mr. Isaacs. It is to me palpable: finding that he had placed himself in a dangerous position, he sent you here for the purpose of coming to some arrangement."

"I assure you," said Isaacs, "I know nothing at arl apout it."

"I will *not* believe you," returned George, "your assurance with me, therefore, can have no effect. Go, Mr. Isaacs, tell him what I have

said: unless I have an interview with him within three days, he need not hope to escape transportation."

"But hadn't we petter shettle thish pishenesh at vonch? Von't it pe petter for ush arl?"

"No. It would only be better for him. Mr. Bull will not hold any further communication either with him or with you. This matter must be settled with me, sir, and with me alone."

"Vell! I didn't know Mishter Pull vash a shild to pe led by the noshe py Mishter Julian."

"No, you merely imagined that Mr. Bull was a fool that could be led by the nose by Mr. Isaacs."

"I don't vant to lead any von py the noshe," rejoined Isaacs, moving towards the door. "I'm a reshpectable man, I vood have you to know. I came here for hish advantash. If Mishter Pull refushesh to shettle, I musht do the pesht vat I can, and he musht take the conshequencesh of hish folly. Coot tay, Mishter Julian! Coot tay, Mishter Pull. I hope you'll get change for your note, Mishter Pull. I vish you a very coot tay." Whereupon he left the office with a sneer, which the muscles of an Israelite only can establish.

"I didn't like to say anything," said Bull, when Mr. Isaacs had departed; "but I think it would have been better to come to terms. You see, my dear boy, however long it goes on, we must both make a sacrifice, we must: don't you see?"

"I see," returned George, "that *he* will have to make no sacrifice. He gave nothing for the half which he holds, depend upon that. He has been offered, perhaps, ten or fifteen pounds to get the other half out of your hands, and the probability is, that had he succeeded, he would, in spite of Mr. Tynte, have kept the whole."

"Suppose he had, my dear boy—suppose he had; what have I to do with that? What is the value of the half-note to me? I can do nothing with it, I can't; I may as well have a piece of blank paper."

"Will you take a hundred pounds for it?"

"Nay," replied Bull, suddenly assuming the shrewd and suasive aspect with which he invariably bargained. "Nay; that is too little, it is. Nay, I'll tell you what I'll do with you: I'll lose twenty pounds; —there! And that's a deal of money."

"Keep it," said George, and you will not lose a shilling: you will, on the contrary, gain ten pounds by the transaction. I have not the smallest doubt of being able to get the whole."

"But I'd rather let you have it, I would," rejoined Bull, who had very considerable doubts on the subject. "Say a hundred and fifty for it! Come—there! We've never had a piece of business together yet. Come; say a hundred and fifty, and it's yours."

"No; I'll give you a hundred, and then I shall make a hundred by it."

Bull was by no means so sure upon this point; he thought it indeed very doubtful: besides, it struck him at the time, that after what had occurred, the other half might be destroyed; and hence, feeling very acutely that it were better to lose one hundred pounds than two, he

said, mournfully, after much deliberation, "Well; it's a deal of money to lose; but as it's our first transaction, you shall have it."

George accordingly gave him a cheque for the amount; and, in the course of the day, to Bull's bitter mortification, he placed before him the note complete. The wound thus inflicted was, however, partly healed by the information that he and his friend who had become bail for George were released; for George had seen Tynte whom he so dreadfully alarmed that he not only gave the half-note up at once, but went with him to have the villanous action withdrawn.

It being now no longer necessary for George to borrow money, and having heard nothing more from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he started for Plymouth on the following day, with the view of completing the purchase of the brig, and of giving an impetus to the progress of his speculation.

During his absence, both Frederick and the broker had been active; so active, indeed, that on his arrival a great proportion of the potatoes had been delivered, although they were in the ground when they were purchased, while the vessel had been fitted up smartly, and engagements had been made with a master and crew.

Having consulted the broker, who appeared to be, and was, extremely anxious to do all in his power to serve him, George determined on sending his first cargo to Newport, in order that they might be purchased for the Bristol market. The brig was accordingly loaded; and when Frederick, who went with her as supercargo, had sold the potatoes at Newport, at the rate of seven shillings per bag, he returned with a cargo of coals, which more than covered the whole of the expenses; and George was so much pleased with the intelligence and activity he had displayed, that he not only made him a handsome present, but left the entire management of the rest in his hands—to the delight of Colman, who wept, he was so glad—and having taken leave of the friends whom he had made during his stay, returned to town with the best wishes of them all.

The exertions which Frederick now made were most zealous. He was up at it early and late. He saw everything done himself: he felt bound to do all in his power to promote the interests of George, who had reposed so much confidence in him; and the result was, that when the potatoes had been disposed of, and the vessel had arrived in the river, George found that he had cleared nearly a thousand pounds more than he had ever expected.

The arrival of Frederick created quite a sensation at George's residence. Julia was exceedingly anxious to see him, and so was Helen, and so was Jane; they knew they should be delighted with him—oh! they were perfectly sure that they should; and when George brought him home the next evening, they were. Jane fell in love with him at once; in Julia's estimation, he was, in personal appearance, second only to her George; while Helen pronounced him to be, with the exception of Mr. Julian, the most elegant and unassuming person she had ever had the pleasure to know.

It was observed too, in the course of the evening, that Frederick re-

garded Helen with more than ordinary interest, which Jane thought particularly hard, for he scarcely noticed her, although she did all she possibly could to fascinate him. She had too much tact, however, to allow her vexation to appear: she smiled, and seemed to be as much delighted as the rest, although she really did begin to think that Helen was not quite so beautiful, or so interesting as she appeared to be in her view before.

"You remember your promise," said Julia, when the excellences of the brig had been for some time under discussion, "You remember that you promised to take us on board, do you not?"

"Oh yes: you can go when you please."

"But when shall it be? If you don't take us soon, Helen and I will endeavour to prevail upon Mr. Broadbridge to take us. But say, George, when shall we go?"

"To-morrow, if you like. But you must put on white dresses."

"Oh yes: that we'll do: we'll wear anything you please. You cannot conceive, Mr. Broadbridge, how I long to go on board."

"I fear you'll not find her quite so clean as you might expect," returned Frederick; "coal-dust is so very searching."

"Oh then! that I apprehend is the reason of our being so particularly directed to wear white? Very well, master George; but we'll not be disappointed! *We* don't mind a little coal-dust, Helen, do we?"

"Oh dear no," replied Helen, "not at all."

"Shall we dine on board? Oh yes, do let us dine!—It will be so pleasant."

"You must not expect a very splendid dinner."

"Oh, anything will do! We are not at all particular. I am sure that we shall enjoy ourselves much."

It was accordingly arranged that they were to go the next day; and as the evening was then far advanced, Frederick, in a manner which proved how highly delighted he was with them all, took his leave.

On the following morning, early, after having seen the master of the vessel, and told him who were coming on board, in order that everything might be made as clean as possible, he went to the office to arrange certain papers having reference to the brig, and found that George had already arrived.

"Mr. Julian," said he, embracing the first opportunity that occurred, "is Miss Grantley a sister of Mrs. Julian?"

"No: merely a friend," replied George.

"Oh—I thought they had been sisters."

"They are as fond of each other as if they were sisters!"

"She appears to be very amiable."

"She is very amiable. Has she made a very deep impression, Fred?"

"Oh, no," replied Fred, feeling slightly confused, "that is quite out of the question."

"I do not believe," rejoined George, with a smile, "that it is quite out of the question! I'll tell her of the conquest she has made."

"Not for the world, Mr. Julian!—no—please do not name it?"

"Well; I *will* not. I may perhaps tell you a little more about Helen some day."

Here the subject dropped, and when noon had arrived, George sent Fred round to accompany the ladies, promising to be on board himself to receive them.

This was a joyful task for Fred; he undertook it with alacrity: and when he had left, George called upon Bull, and having prevailed upon him to join them—notwithstanding he wished to be on 'Change to see if things were looking up—he did; they walked down together, ordered a dinner at the nearest hotel, and then went on board the brig.

The ladies soon arrived, and as the master had been the whole of that morning engaged in contriving a perfectly original ladder, which he offered to back against the world, they managed to reach the deck in safety, and that with a great degree of comfort, considering.

But strange as it may appear, they were not at all struck with the beauty of the vessel! No! they looked fore and aft, they looked at the rigging, they looked down the hold, they looked, in short, at everything at which they could look, and *yet* they were by no means dazzled. But the cabin,—ay, it might be a beautiful cabin; yes, of that they had no doubt. They had heard much of cabins and of cabin-boys, pretty little doves with flaxen hair and lilly hands; they had seen portraits of them frequently, with their shirt-collars white as the driven snow, rólling over their beautiful blue jackets, and looking as rosy and as smart as the children of the aristocracy. Oh! they felt perfectly sure that all the beauty of the vessel was concentred in the cabin.

Having unanimously made up their minds to this, they were conducted by George down a hole, about four feet square, into a little semicircular sort of a place, in which there was just room enough for six, and no more.

"Well!" said George; "what do you think of the cabin?"

"Is *this* the cabin!" exclaimed Julia, looking with an expression of the most intense astonishment, first at Helen, and then at Jane, by both of whom the exclamation was echoed, "Is this the cabin?"

"Yes;" replied George, "and a very nice compact little place it is, too!"

Well; they *sat* down; but of all the surprises they ever experienced in the whole course of their lives, this was beyond all comparison the greatest.

"Now, ladies, make yourselves perfectly at home," said George, who highly enjoyed their astonishment. "If you'd like to lie down a little while before dinner, you'll find a bed here," he added, opening one of the berths; "we have everything convenient, you see, in the cabin."

He then opened a bottle of sherry, and having told them that he would send some biscuits down immediately, went upon deck, where he procured half-a-dozen of the hardest and blackest on board, and directed one of the boys to take them down in his hand to the ladies.

Compared with those that are to be found in a regular coal-brig, this boy was quite respectable in his appearance: his black hair was matted with tar, his skin was like nothing so much as the outside fat of a smoke-dried ham, and while his red woollen shirt had gone all to pieces, his

canvas trousers, which once were white, were caked all over with coal-dust and grease.

"Biscuits," said he, as he entered the cabin.

"What are *you*?" inquired Julia.

"Boy!"

"But not the cabin-boy?"

"Yes I am."

And while Julia was looking at her friends in amazement, he managed very dexterously to disappear.

"Dear me! what an untidy little creature!" exclaimed Julia, on finding that he had vanished.

"And such a shirt!" cried Jane; "oh! Heaven knows!—*did* you see his shirt? And then the idea of his bringing the biscuits in his naked hands!—and such hands too!—dear me, what hands!"

And as a striking fact, it is worthy of being recorded, that all their previously established notions of a rosy-cheeked, curly-headed cabin-boy had been by this little living sample completely upset.

"But look at the biscuits!" cried Helen, quite struck with the colour as well as the manifest hardness of the article. "Will you permit me, ladies, to offer you a biscuit?"

"Well, did you ever see, in all your days!" cried Jane; "who can bite them? One ought to have elephant's teeth! Dear me, if I'd nothing but these things to eat, how long should I live: I am sure that I couldn't manage more than one in six months, were I to nibble at it night and day without intermission."

"They *are* hard," observed Julia.

"Hard!" cried Jane, "I could almost as easily get through a brick."

"Hush!" whispered Julia, "they are coming." And the next moment Pompey put in his appearance, having been sent down by George with instructions to state to them the fact of his being the cook.

"Please," said Pompey, with a grin, which was very unique, "Massa arks me to arks you wedder you hab chop or steak: me am cook—yes, wedder chop or steak?"

Some men of colour have decent skins, highly polished and very respectable; but the skin which Pompey wore, being dull as soot, seemed as if, in taking pains to look interesting and pale, he had got it to a sort of a whitish-black, and had thereby ruined his complexion.

As he paused for a reply at the cabin door, Julia looked at him for a moment: it was, however, but for a moment; for, as it struck her that an immediate answer was required, she pronounced the word "either," when he said, "bery well," and departed.

"Well," said Jane, "did you ever, since the day you were born, see half such a fright? And for a cook, too, above all things under the sun! What stomachs they must have!"

The boy produced a powerful sensation; but nothing at all *like* the sensation created by Pompey. They were all quite sure that they couldn't touch a thing!—*that* they were not long making up their minds to.

"Five-and twenty per cent upon the amount recovered."

"And what is the amount claimed?"

"Oh, the property I have ascertained to be worth upwards of a hundred thousand pounds."

"Indeed! One would imagine the temptation to be sufficiently great to have induced him to go on with it—if, indeed, he saw even the slightest prospect of success."

"Which I fear he never did see."

"But what are the grounds upon which the claim rests?"

Fred proceeded to explain; and from the explanation, George gathered, that a Montague Broadbridge, having been abroad from a very early age, died suddenly, and intestate, soon after his return to England; that while living he had no known relations, but when advertisements appeared for the next of kin after his death, Fred, and Joseph, a cousin of his, who was himself a rich man, presented themselves as claimants; that Joseph had made great efforts, and had expended considerable sums of money with the view of establishing his claim, and that, although he had been unsuccessful, he still expected to succeed; that according to a pedigree prepared by a celebrated genealogist after much research, there could exist no moral doubt of Frederick's right; but that there was one link in the chain which could not legally be proved, and that was the marriage of his grandfather, of which no account then existed in the register of the parish in which the marriage took place.

"Have you seen this register yourself?" inquired George.

"Oh yes," replied Fred, "I have spent whole days in looking over it."

"Then nothing but an account of this marriage is wanting?"

"Nothing more."

"It's very strange that it should not be in the register. Of course he was married?"

"Oh, yes! of that I am certain. On one of the leaves of an old Bible I have in my desk, there is a note of the occurrence; but by some means or other the date has been torn off."

"That's unfortunate. However, send for the whole of your papers; let me have them, and I'll enter into the thing from first to last. I'll go myself and see this register. But in the mean time, Fred, as far as Helen is concerned, let me recommend you not to be in haste. You may depend upon this, that I will do all I can to aid you,—but be cautious."

Fred promised that he would, and having thanked him warmly for his advice in that affair, and endeavoured to explain to him how grateful he should feel for his assistance in the other, he wrote a letter with a comparatively light heart to Plymouth for the trunk in which the whole of his papers were.

CHAPTER XI

MAC GREGOR'S RETURN.

A FEW days after this, George received a letter from Mac Gregor, announcing his arrival in England, and stating that every thing had been satisfactorily arranged, that he should be in town if possible that evening, and that within an hour after he arrived he hoped to have the pleasure of seeing him at the office.

George had no sooner read this letter than he started off to call upon Bull, whose spirits were raised to a pitch of ecstacy at the idea alone of Mac Gregor's return, for he certainly had, since his departure, entertained a strong notion, that as he had got a *deal* of money out of him, he never intended to come back at all. But now, here was the man! —there could be no mistake now about his honourable intentions—he had been to Poyais and come back, and that too with news the most glorious!

"'I am happy to inform you,'" said he, reading the letter for the fifth time, "'that every thing has been satisfactorily arranged.' My dear boy," he added, "our fortunes are made, they are; nothing can be clearer than that. Everything—*every thing* satisfactorily arranged —*satisfactorily* arranged—mark *arranged!*—Of course he has got the authority of the king, and the resources of the country are at our disposal!"

"Well, that we shall see this evening when he arrives."

"But here it is now, my dear boy! *Ev—ery—thing sat—is—fac—torily arranged!*—What can it mean if it don't mean that? It can't mean anything else, it can't, any how! But what a singular fellow it is to sign his name Gregor—Gregor! as if he himself were the sovereign of Poyais! Well, but now what's the first thing to be done?"

"Why, the first thing," said George, "is to ascertain exactly *what* arrangements he has made."

"Yes, but you know, my dear boy, we must bestir ourselves, we must. We must look out for offices: it must not be at either of ours you know: we must have them magnificent and spacious;—let me see, where are there any large offices to let?"

"In the first place," said George, "Where are we to take Mac Gregor when he arrives in order to hear his explanation."

"Where are we to take him, my dear boy? Won't it do here?"

"We had better go to some more convenient place, I think. It may be late when he comes. Besides, we ought to know more than he might feel disposed to enter into here."

"True, true," returned Bull, "I understand. Well, let us go home to my house, and have him over a glass of wine."

"Shall we take Fred with us? He may be useful as an amanuensis;

especially as I mean to propose that we give him the appointment of secretary. I think that he will be very efficient."

"I think so too. I'm quite taken with that young man, I am: I think him a very worthy and intelligent young fellow. Oh, we'll take him, by all means. We'll all go together in a coach, we will; the fare's a deal of money, but we'll do the thing respectable."

It was accordingly thus settled. George sent word to Julia that he should in all probability be late, and the whole of the morning was occupied by Bull in building the most magnificent castles the human imagination ever conceived.

Towards the evening, in order that they might all be in readiness, George went to Bull's office with Fred, and remained there discussing the subject of loans, until one of the clerks announced the arrival of Mac Gregor.

Bull was up in an instant, and flew to the door with the view of being the first to explain how delighted he was to see him; but on taking his hand, he was so struck with his appearance that for a moment he had scarcely power to utter a word.

And the change that had been effected was indeed most striking. Dressed in a richly braided military frock, the breast of which was covered with orders, he appeared an altogether different man; in short, looked *like* what he represented himself to be,—the Sovereign Prince of Poyais!

After the first cordial greeting—for His Highness so far forgot his dignity as to relinquish for a moment his majestic air—he announced, in order to shew at once what progress he had made, that he had been proclaimed publicly as GREGOR THE FIRST, SOVEREIGN PRINCE AND CAZIQUE OF THE POYAIS NATION.

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Bull, on hearing this announcement, which almost stunned him. "I am glad of it, very glad of it, I am;" he added, rubbing his knees until his hands became hot. "I'm delighted to hear it! Our fortunes are made!—but don't say another syllable now!—we'll all go home together, and then we can talk this great matter over calmly, you know, calmly. But what a sensation the title will make!"

"It will have a good effect," observed George.

"An astounding effect it will have, it will, perfectly astounding! The very thing!—nothing could possibly be better!"

"You have, of course, your credentials?" said George.

"Oh! I have them all here. This document alone will convince the most incredulous."

A coach was then sent for, and when it arrived, they started at once for Bull's residence; and on the way his Serene Highness signified his conviction that the title by which he had been publicly proclaimed should not on any occasion be dispensed with.

"You will understand my motive," he added; "I feel sure that you will not ascribe it to any foolish vanity: I suggest the propriety, simply because I feel that it will tend to give *éclat* to our proceedings."

"Oh! I see," returned Bull, "I see the object at a glance, and a very proper object it is. The thing will take the town by storm, it will—by storm!"

On arriving at the house, Bull led the way into his drawing-room; and having produced the wine before they commenced, that they might not afterwards be disturbed, he took his seat directly opposite his Highness, who then proceeded to relate in glowing colours every circumstance connected with his expedition.

To this history—and it was a most interesting one, they listened with almost breathless attention, and certainly, according to his Highness's account, his success had been signal and complete.

"Poyais," said he, in describing the country, "is the paradise of the world—the most delightful spot upon earth. Some have supposed that the Mosquito-shore derived its name from the swarm of small islands by which its coast is surrounded; but the fact is, the Spaniards, being unable to subdue the noble spirited natives, gave them what they conceived to be a repulsive name. This general name of the Mosquitoes, embraces the whole of the nations occupying the territory which extends from Cape Honduras, to the beautiful Lake Nicaragua—a space which takes in more than a hundred and fifty leagues of the shore—as well as the inner space between the great coast and the chain of mountains, whose tops touch heaven. It is a lovely country! And not only is it enchanting to the eye, but its soil is, beyond conception rich. The cotton-bush grows like the thistle; cocoa and chocolate flourish spontaneously; the fruit is the finest and most delicious upon earth; while maize, yams, potatoes—nay, every description of vegetables there, spring up comparatively like mushrooms here. And as for fish! cast but a net off any part of the coast, and it is almost instantaneously full; and if you look at the produce in a commercial point of view, the revenues which might be derived are beyond all human calculation."

"It must," exclaimed Bull, "be a country indeed!"

"It is, sir, a country, a lovely country, the most charming country on the face of the globe. I have been in most countries, and am able to judge; and when I assert that there is no country comparable with it under heaven, I defy contradiction."

"And the inhabitants?" suggested George.

"Brave, loyal, and intelligent! There are two distinct *castes*, the Red and the Black. The Red are the originals: the Black are the descendants of fifty negroes, who, on being sold in the neighbouring islands, obtained their liberty in consequence of the vessel they were on board being wrecked. But even they are now a noble race, equally generous and virtuous with the Reds, and so highly appreciate honour, that they never trust a man who has once deceived them, or even in the most unimportant matter forfeited his word: the effect which this has upon their conduct is amazing. You find no disaffection, no discontent there: all are happy and tranquil. His Majesty, the King, has no occasion for guards; and hence he has none. It is the place to which, before all other places upon earth, the surplus population of

Great Britain should emigrate. There is no country like it! If they desire to flourish, they should at once go there."

"If I were a somewhat younger man than I am," observed Bull, "I should be half inclined to go out myself."

"I hope to see you there as it is," said His Highness. "I hope that at a period not very remote we shall all be there together."

Bull smiled and shook his head.

"Why not?" continued His Highness. "If a nation be flourishing through our instrumentality, should we deprive ourselves of the peculiar pleasure of witnessing the work of our own hands? Why should you not go? Why should we not all go when the great and glorious object we propose shall be attained? For my part, I not only hope but expect to see you all, and when I do, all shall be honoured. Already, Mr. Julian, whom I have reason to respect highly, may henceforth consider himself Knight Commander of the Order of the Green Cross, the highest honour which I, as Sovereign Prince of Poyais, have the power to confer, and, by virtue of my authority, George St. George Julian is Knight Commander of the Order of the Green Cross accordingly."

His Highness then solemnly transferred one of the orders from his own breast to that of *Sir* George, at the same time observing, that however unimportant it might then appear to be, he would know, anon, that by virtue of wearing that order he stood next to him in the Republic of Poyais.

Bull's faculties were now in a state of confusion: he sat amazed, looking full over his spectacles, with his mouth wide open; while George, to whom the ceremony at first seemed a most absurd farce, was so impressed with the grandeur of Mac Gregor, his solemn aspect and dignified air, that all ideas of mockery were supplanted by the conviction that Mac Gregor was in reality what he assumed to be, and that *he* was in reality a Knight Commander of the Green Cross.

Nor did there appear to be, even on reflection, strange as it may seem, sufficient grounds to repudiate, or even to weaken that conviction; for there were the documents in which his title was set forth, clearly and distinctly acknowledging his sovereignty; while for all he assumed he produced his authority, signed by the Mosquito king. It was strange! —most strange! Yet, what could they say?—what could they think? They could not but think that it was true. And they marvelled at the extraordinary character of the truth, and continued to marvel until they separated for the night, with the understanding that operations were to commence on the morrow.

CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH THE FIRST LOAN IS RAISED.

On the morrow proceedings were accordingly commenced, and in a way well calculated to inspire public confidence. The cazique, covered with orders, appeared daily upon 'Change: he was, indeed, the observed of all observers: every one knew him to be the cazique; and being a fine, handsome, noble-looking fellow, his appearance alone created a powerful sensation; but that, in connexion with the object proposed, had the effect of taking the judgment of the citizens by storm.

Poyais was in the mouth of every speculative man. nothing was talked of so much as Poyais; for prospectuses had been plentifully distributed, while advertisements of the most flaming character appeared constantly in every paper throughout the kingdom.

It is, moreover, to be remarked, that this was peculiarly a speculative era; that they were the palmy days of bubblemongers of every caste; and that any scheme, no matter how visionary or wild, was, in the hands of ingenious knaves, quite sure to succeed. An almost universal mania possessed the public mind: people became the absolute slaves of its influence; and, during its ascendancy, the basis was laid for the ruin of thousands of families, whose prospects were soon after utterly blasted.

It is of course well to encourage speculation: the existence of the spirit of enterprise is essential to the greatness of a nation: the whole of our vast improvements,—nay, civilization itself, and all the blessings with which it teems, are ascribable solely to the operation of that spirit; but when men of limited means are to be found eagerly embarking in a project of which the failure must involve them and all connected with them, in ruin, it may truly be said that much madness prevails; for, that such blind recklessness amounts to a species of madness, is a fact which is placed beyond the pale of dispute.

At this period thousands of short-sighted persons, dazzled by the brilliant misrepresentations of dishonourable men, thus ran wild. Nor were they with even this, content:—they spread the contagion; they prevailed upon all over whom they possessed influence, or who had confidence in their judgment, to follow their ruinous example; and widows innumerable, children, and aged persons having narrow incomes, were thus reduced to absolute beggary.

Of *course*, the most specious baits were held out; but it is, notwithstanding that, amazing, that reasonable beings should have been so extensively gulled; for what real security had they? It was all essentially nominal; and yet, in spite of reason, in spite of the perpetual warnings of experienced far-seeing men, the most transparent bubbles ever blown were, by virtue of this merely nominal security, successful

In order, however, to impart a somewhat more exact notion of the nature of the security offered, it will be well to transcribe what His

Highness was pleased to term the General Mortgage Bond which will at the same time serve to convey an idea of the scale upon which the whole thing was conducted.

THE POYAIS LOAN.

'KNOW all men by these presents, that I, GREGOR MAC GREGOR 'the First, Sovereign Prince of the Independent State of Poyais and its 'Dependencies, Cazique of the Poyais Nation, &c. &c. &c., have, for 'the purpose of consolidating the said State, defraying the expenses 'of the same, and promoting the general development of the natural 'advantages of the country, negotiated and raised a loan of 200,000*l.* 'sterling for the service of the said state, and which has been placed at 'the disposal of the said state.

'Now, therefore, I do declare, for and on behalf and in the name of 'the said government of Poyais, that the terms and conditions upon 'which the said loan has been so raised, are as follows:—

'FIRST: That the said loan has been raised on security of this pre-'sent instrument or general bond which shall be divided into 2000 'shares or special bonds of 100*l.* sterling each, to be hereafter issued, 'payable to bearer with interest at the rate of 5*l.* per cent. per annum, 'which interest shall commence from the first day of May, and shall be 'paid half yearly in London without any deduction, the first payment 'to begin and be made on the first day of November.

'SECOND: That all the revenues of the said State of Poyais shall 'be, and they are hereby declared to be, pledged by this general bond 'to all the holders of the aforesaid special bonds for the payment of the 'principal and interest of the said loan in manner hereinafter mentioned. 'And further that a duty of 2½ per cent. over and above the duty now 'imposed and payable, shall be laid upon all merchandise imported into 'the State of Poyais after the eleventh day of June, and the same 'together with all duties now levied, or which may be hereafter levied 'upon such imports, and also the proceeds of all sales of land to settlers 'or otherwise by the said government shall be and are hereby specially 'charged and pledged with and for the payment of the interest of 'the said loan and the redemption of the principal thereof. And 'that Treasurers-General for the time being shall be authorised, 'directed and bound, to collect and keep separate, for the purposes 'herein mentioned, the said duties upon imports and proceeds of sales of 'land, and shall not apply any part of the said duties upon imports to 'the ordinary and extraordinary purposes of the state, until the sum 'necessary for the half yearly remittance to England, of the interest and 'provision for the sinking-fund hereinafter mentioned, shall be com-'pleted and ready for transmission; and not more than five sixths 'parts of the clear proceeds from sales of land shall be applied to those 'purposes until the debt for the time being under this present security 'shall be discharged. And if from any cause a deficiency shall occur 'at the end of any half year in the amount of the said duties upon im-'ports, so especially pledged as aforesaid, then and in every such case

'the said treasurers-general for the time being, shall be authorised, 'directed and bound to make good such deficiency out of the general 'revenues of the state; and no part of such general revenues shall be 'applied to the ordinary or extraordinary purposes of the state until 'the interest and sinking-fund of the said loan shall be fully and 'punctually provided for at the end of every half year. And in order to 'provide for the redemption of the principal sum of the said loan, the 'sum of 2000*l.* sterling shall be appropriated in the first year from the 'date hereof, and the sum of 1000*l.* shall be remitted to England in every 'succeeding year by equal half yearly payments, together with one 'sixth part of the net proceeds of all sales of land as the same shall 'be made from time to time by the said government to settlers or other-'wise, to be applied as a sinking-fund in the redemption of the bonds 'in circulation at or under par; and the first of such half yearly pay-'ments, amounting to 500*l.* sterling to be applied as a sinking-fund, 'shall be made on the first day of January. The treasurers-general 'for the time being shall be especially charged with the execution of 'this article in all its parts, and with the remittances, under the direc-'tion and at the expense and for the account and use of the Govern 'ment of Poyais to the bankers in London, in the name of the agent 'and commissioners for the time being for the management and re-'demption of this loan in London, of the necessary funds for the pay-'ment of the half yearly interest and provision for the sinking-fund as 'aforesaid; which said remittances shall at all times be forwarded from 'Poyais at least two months before the said payments shall severally fall 'due and become payable in London.

'THIRD: The sums engaged to be provided by the foregoing article 'shall be appropriated in the following manner: that is to say, the 'amount necessary to pay the interest of the said loan shall be ap-'propriated and applied in the manner set forth in Article I The 'amount engaged to be provided for the sinking-fund shall in the first 'instance to the extent of such provision, be employed in the purchase of 'bonds; and all future half yearly remittances for the same purpose, as 'hereinbefore provided for, together also with the amount of the interest 'of all bonds redeemed, shall be applied to the further redemption of 'outstanding bonds, within the period of the half year next following 'every such remittance until the final redemption of the said loan. And 'if at any time the said special bonds shall be above par, exclusive of 'the dividend then due, in order that the sinking-fund may continue in 'due operation, the agent for the time being acting in the said loan, or 'some other person duly authorised by the government of the said state 'of Poyais, shall in such manner and form as they may think proper, 'cause it to be determined by lot, to be drawn by the said agent, which 'of the outstanding bonds shall be paid off at par; and the bonds thus 'determined to be paid off shall not exceed the amount of the then 'unapplied produce of the sinking-fund for that half year; and the 'numbers of such bonds so to be paid off shall be advertised in the '*London Gazette*, and be paid on demand, with interest for the half 'year current at the time of such advertisement. And all further

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'interest on the same shall thenceforth cease, and all bonds so paid off 'shall be thereupon cancelled, and deposited at the said banking-house 'in London, and remain so deposited until the whole of the said loan 'shall be paid off; and the numbers of the bonds so paid off and can-'celled in each half year shall be advertised in the *London Gazette*.

'FOURTH: That the holders of the said special bonds shall be at 'any time and at all times entitled to have and take a portion or por-'tions of land in the said state of Poyais in exchange for any bond or 'bonds of which they may so be the holder or holders, and to the amount 'thereof at par, at the rate or price at which such land shall be selling 'at the time of such exchange, if greater than the present price, but at 'no less rate or price than two dollars per acre, at which the same is 'now selling: and the land so to be taken in exchange to be drawn by 'lot by the agent resident in London for the sale of the said land, out 'of any allotment or allotments thereof which shall then be on sale, 'but subject to a feudal duty of one cent of a dollar per acre.

'FIFTH: That the holders of the said special bonds shall at any 'time and at all times be entitled to pay one half the duties due by any 'one individual ship to the customs in Poyais, in the aforesaid special 'bonds, which shall be taken and received at par.

'SIXTH: That, as an additional security for the due payment of the 'interest, and for the redemption at any time of all or any part of the 'principal of the said loan, one-tenth part of the net proceeds of all 'special bonds sold, shall be set apart and laid out in the purchase of 'four-per-cent annuities in England, or deposited with the bankers of 'the said loan, they allowing interest for the same in the name of the 'said agent for the time being, for the said loan, or of commissioners 'to be appointed for that purpose, to be from time to time applied by 'him or them to any of the purposes or stipulations of this general 'bond, as may become necessary or expedient.

'SEVENTH: That if, at the expiration of thirty years from the day 'of the date hereof, any of the said bonds should remain not discharged, 'or unredeemed by the sinking-fund, exchange in land or payment of 'duties at the customs in Poyais as aforesaid, then and in that case the 'government of the said state of Poyais shall pay off all and every of 'such bonds at par.

'EIGHTH: That this present instrument or general bond shall be 'deposited and remain in the said banking-house in London until the 'final redemption of the said loan.

'And I, the said Gregor Mac Gregor, for and in the name of the said 'government of Poyais, declare that in raising the said loan it was stipu-'lated and agreed, and I do as Sovereign Prince of the said State of Poyais 'hereby engage and agree that I shall not raise a contract for any new 'loan in Europe, unless one-eighth part of the present loan shall have 'been previously redeemed, or unless in the contract for such new loan 'it is stipulated that the first proceeds of and from such new loan, or a 'competent part of such proceeds shall be applied in or towards 'the discharge of the debt then remaining unpaid upon the present 'loan at par within twelve months from the date of such contract.

'And I do, as such Sovereign Prince of the said State of Poyais, and 'as fully representing the same, hereby bind myself my heirs and succes- 'sors, together with the government and all the public authorities 'thereof which now do, or may hereafter exist, to perform and fulfil 'faithfully and truly all the foregoing engagements and conditions, 'and for no reason and on no pretence whatsoever, at any time, or 'under any circumstances, to refuse, evade or delay, or attempt to evade 'or delay, the full and ample performance and fulfilment as in me may 'lie and be practicable of the aforesaid engagements and conditions on 'the part and behalf of the said State or any of them.

'And I do, by these presents, declare the said government respon- 'sible, and legally and solemnly bound to all persons collectively 'intrusted in the said loan of £200,000 sterling, and individually to 'each of them for the amount of the special bonds and interest for 'which for the time being they may be the holders.

'In faith whereof I, the said Gregor Mac Gregor, as such Sovereign 'Prince, of and for and on behalf of the said government of Poyais, 'have signed the present general bond, and have affixed thereto the 'Seal of State.

'GREGOR MAC GREGOR, P.'

This was the security offered, and upon this and this alone, however incredible it may appear, nearly a hundred and fifty thousand pounds were in a short time actually raised!

While, however, the "loan" was progressing, His Highness lived in magnificent style; every thing about him was of a character the most superb, and during his stay in Paris, which he honoured with a visit, as a matter of business solely, he never appeared in public but in his carriage of state, drawn by six richly caparisoned horses. Upon the Parisians this well sustained grandeur had a powerful effect, and more especially as his breast was always studded with orders: they hailed him as a prince!—he was indeed in their view most *distingué!* and being firmly resolved to keep alive the sensation he had created, he lived at the rate of fifty thousand a year, although he had been but a few months previously starving in a prison.

This monstrous extravagance at first partially opened the eyes of George; but as they were ingeniously closed again by His Highness, he proceeded with indefatigable zeal to accomplish the object proposed. From the dawn of day until midnight he was at it without intermission; he may be said to have set his soul upon the business in hand, for all the energies of his mind and body were devoted exclusively with a view to its success.

This Mac Gregor well knew; he knew besides that if the real object were to appear he should be deprived at once of his valuable services, and hence his anxiety to keep him in the dark. George firmly believed that all was just and legitimate, and acting upon this belief he viewed the object as being most noble in its character, and therefore resolved to do all in his power to promote it.

As the special bonds were eagerly secured, advertisements appeared in

the newspapers daily, some for vessels, some for implements of husbandry, others for provisions; in short, estimates for everything essential to the foundation of a new settlement were constantly demanded, which gave an *éclat* to the whole affair, and kept up the price of the bonds not in London alone, but in Amsterdam, Paris, and Hamburg.

Emigrants especially were directed to turn their attention to this land of promise, to which arrangements had been made to convey them on terms the most liberal, while the collateral advantages they were to derive were portrayed in the most tempting colours. Mechanics of every description, agricultural labourers, butchers, bakers, grocers, grooms, brickmakers, schoolmasters, and barbers were assured of the most brilliant success; while persons of small capital received peculiarly pressing invitations to go out, not because His Highness imagined that their capital would have a tendency to increase the importance of Poyais in the scale of nations, but because he was anxious both to let them have land at the rate of two dollars per acre, and to oblige them by exchanging their surplus cash for the notes of the National Bank of Poyais.

Half-pay officers were also invited, with medical men, and curates who imagined that mitres would become them: clerks were moreover solicited to fill lucrative offices in the customs and excise, for which of course they were expected to pay premiums here. A lieutenant-governor was appointed, with instructions to raise a mighty army—a treasurer-general; a governor of the imaginary National Bank, with commissioners, magistrates, superintendants—in short, functionaries of every description received appointments on application to the Prince, who administered to most of them the oath of allegiance!—and when all these preliminaries had been arranged, to the entire satisfaction of His Highness, he, being extremely anxious to send off the first batch of emigrants, appointed a day for their going on board; when, the provisions and stores having previously been shipped, the first vessel sailed for Poyais.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE IMMORTAL PETER CONCEIVES ANOTHER SCHEME, AND THEN STARTS FOR THE MOSQUITO-SHORE.

Up to this point—namely, the departure of the Honduras packet with sixty-five emigrants on board, Mac Gregor had conducted the affair with such consummate ingenuity, that even the suspicions of George had been lulled; but when on dining with His Highness immediately afterwards, he saw the oath of allegiance administered to the officers about to embark in the next vessel, and noticed the peculiar

chuckle of Mac Gregor, who had on that occasion taken too much wine, he began to entertain strong doubts on the subject of His Highness's motives being honourable; still, in the absence of proof, he went on hoping that all his suspicions were baseless, and acting upon his original conviction of the noble character of the object proposed.

While George was thus zealously engaged, and just before the Kennersly Castle—the vessel appointed to follow the Honduras packet—was ready to sail, he was visited by Weesense, who, having conceived a plan for removing the only objection to Mosquitia that had been started by persons wishing to emigrate, was anxious to communicate the nature of that plan with the view of securing the patronage of the Prince.

"I have a scheme, Mr. Julian," said he, on opening the subject, "an extraordinary scheme, sir,—a scheme which will render the Mosquito-shore, sir, a paradise."

"Indeed!" exclaimed George; "I know, of course, that you are an extremely clever person, but I should scarcely have imagined that possible!"

"I'll prove that it is, sir: I'll prove it to demonstration; and if, when I have proved it, you will only do me the favour to introduce me to His Highness the Prince, I'll stake my reputation that I'll make *your* fortune as well as my own in six months!"

"Well, if that be the case, I shall certainly appreciate its value."

"You will, sir; I am perfectly sure that you will. I only thought of it this morning, do you know, while in bed! It's extraordinary how these things, sir, *will* strike a man! They are like poetic images, they'll only come just when they please—you can't force them, try all you know—or like friends, farthest off when most wanted."

"You cannot, at all events, in this case complain."

"That is the thing, sir—the very thing which makes it so fortunate!—the fact of its occurring to me just in the nick of time, is what I look at; and the moment it struck me, I leapt out of bed and drew up the prospectus right off."

"What! is it then to be a rival company?" cried George, looking as if the idea had alarmed him.

"*No*, no, no, no; by no manner of means; I propose to act in concert; to forward your plans, to promote your views: it will be anything but a rival company."

"Well, that indeed alters the case; but what do you mean to call it?"

"Why, I'll tell you, sir, what I mean to call it. You are aware, sir, that the Mosquito-shore, or Mosquitia, derived its name from the swarms of mosquitos which sometimes pretty well darken the air, and which bite with remarkable severity. Very well. Now I've looked into natural history, and I there find that this sort of thing is extremely unpleasant, for the creatures when they dig their forks into you leave a sort of poison behind, which induces a species of itching so peculiar, that you are half inclined to scratch the very flesh off your bones. Very well. Now, impressed with the conviction, sir, that if

these fellows were effectually served out, that is to say, if they were utterly exterminated from the face of society, it would be of great national importance, I have invented an elixir, which, in honour of the Prince, I mean to call the Gregorian Specific, composed chiefly of asafœtida and gin, which will make the whole swarm so blind drunk, that they will instantly set to and fight among themselves, and continue to fight till they drop. Very well. Now, in order to bring this, you know, into full operation, I propose to establish a company, to be called The Imperial Poyaisian Association for the Total Intoxication of Mosquitos: capital twenty thousand pounds, in two hundred shares of one hundred pounds each; and according to my calculation the thing will yield about fifteen thousand a year, out of which I should say it would be as well to stipulate for an annuity of five thousand pounds for the use of the patent."

"Yes; that of course would be as well; and the shareholders would be indeed unreasonable to complain. But suppose there are no mosquitos in Poyais at all."

"Oh, but there are swarms, you know."

"I understand not; but if even there be, how do you mean to get them to drink this elixir?"

"Oh, the smell is enough, sir; they don't want to drink; you have only to impregnate the air with the scent. I have tried it on flies, and the effect is very potent, and so instantaneous, that the moment they sniff it they cut away and shake their heads and buzz, and pitch into each other, and feel so indignant!--it is really very amusing, it is, indeed."

"Oh! I shouldn't be surprised; but it occurs to me that if its effects be so fatal to them, its value will be very inconsiderable to you; in other words, if, as you have explained, by impregnating the air you can get them into such a beastly state of intoxication that they will set to work and fight until all are destroyed, it is clear that after that there will be none to destroy, in which case your annuity will not be worth much."

"Ah!" said Peter, biting his nails, "I see; I didn't think of that. But it is a specific!"

"That, of course, I don't mean to dispute; but I fear you are not *au fait* to the object proposed by the inventors of specifics in general; I am inclined to believe that you are not aware of that object being to introduce artificial wants in order that they may eventually appear to be real. It would never do for *them* to effect cures!—No: their aim is to intoxicate their patients, and thereby to lull the disease for a time in order that it may gain greater strength; and when this can be constantly done by specifics, specifics of course are in constant demand. Now, if you by the application of your specific could so intoxicate mosquitos as to make them seem dead for a time, that when people began to marvel at its efficacy, they might rise again and sting them with increased vigour, it would be of great value as far as you are concerned, because the more they consumed, the more of course they would require; but

depend upon it, Peter, he who either kills or cures off hand, will never grow rich by inventing specifics."

"I see, I see," observed Peter, who appeared to have been enlightened. "It isn't a bad move at all, and it strikes me that if the elixir were weakened a little, you know, it might have that effect."

"So it might; but in Poyais Mac Gregor tells me there are no mosquitos."

"Well, certainly he ought to know. If there are none, of course the thing falls to the ground, but if there had been the swarms I have heard that there are, why it strikes me I just could have given them physic."

"Take my advice, Peter; satisfy yourself on the point—go out to Poyais."

"I go to Poyais?"

"Why should you not go? You are doing no good for yourself here; and I need not explain to you, Peter, that your associates are not of the most reputable caste. Be a man, and go out; I'll get you a good berth. It may enable you to realise an honourable fortune; and if it should not, it can do you no harm."

"Well, but really it never occurred to me; I never even dreamt of such a thing; but now, really now, would you recommend me to go?"

"I most certainly should."

"Well; but leave—Well that would be a start!"

"Have you any very powerful attraction here, Peter?"

"Oh! I've no attraction at all! But I say, though, what sort of swells are the natives?—eh?—they're not cannibals, are they?"

"They are as harmless as you are Peter!"

"Because, you know, if they're all fighting swells—not that I can't fight, you know, but one don't always like, you know, to be in hot water."

"I understand. But you'll find them all very pleasant people."

"Well, now really I think I should *like* to go, do you know. But then what an idea!—what would they all say?"

"Why, all whom you allude to would say you were a fool, merely because *they* could no longer make a fool of you."

"That's true, Mr. Julian; they don't treat me well. I am sure I do all in my power to serve them; and what do I get for it? Nothing. I'll go! But then, where's the money to come from?"

'You'll require but little. How much have you got?"

"Three shillings and all told, believe me."

"I don't allude to what you have in your purse."

"All I have in my purse is all I have in the world."

"But have you no means of raising sufficient for an outfit?"

"None whatever: I might, perhaps, borrow a pound or so of Cavendish, provided I kept the thing a secret. If he knew that I intended to leave him, I shouldn't be able to get a shilling."

"Well, but how do you manage to live?"

"Oh—why—I don't know. I run about chiefly for him, you know—finding out people—getting hold of their characters—ascertaining

what they are worth—whether they're of the right sort to be victimised, and so on."

"I see: and when he makes a hit through your instrumentality, you have a present, I suppose, in the shape of a per-centage?"

"Yes, that's it; but I can't get much out of him."

"Why, it would not answer his purpose to make you independent of him, Peter."

"But he might be a little more liberal, too. I make most, however, by lending my acceptance."

"By accepting bills you mean?"

"Yes; I *will* have my half-per-cent on paper."

"Do you accept many bills in the course of a year?"

"Oh, thousands of pounds' worth! I don't know exactly, because I never keep any particular account; but I should say, that I have five thousand pounds' worth out now."

"And all done for Cavendish?"

"Oh, no! I accept bills for many people—any body in fact. 'It pays *me*."

"A bad system, Peter—very bad."

"But what's a man to do?—he must live."

"Have you ever tried to procure any reputable employment?"

"Yes, I've tried; but it's of no use trying. I never have succeeded, and I fear I never shall. I'm sick and tired of going on so, that's a fact. I only wish that something would turn up to enable me to cut the connexion."

"Is it really your *wish* to do so? Tell me candidly."

"It is. If I could only just get up some company, some new association, or something of that sort, by which I could get even barely sufficient to live upon, see how very soon I'd shake them off, sir—that all."

"The idea of getting up a company is in your case out of the question. But if you really desire to repudiate the system with which you are connected, a fair opportunity presents itself now. Go to Poyais, Peter! Try your fortune there. I'll take care that you shall have a respectable appointment, and I'll give you a free passage out."

"Well, that's very kind, though—very, I must say. I feel much obliged, and I'll certainly think about it seriously."

"Make up your mind at once, Peter. The Kennersly Castle sails next week: take my advice, and go out with her."

"Well, I think I should like it; but the money, you see—I must have some money—that knocks it all on the head."

"Not necessarily. How are you off for clothes?"

"Oh, I've got plenty of clothes: a man like me can't afford to be short of clothes."

"Well, then, you'll want but a trifle, which trifle I'll lend you. Now what say you?

"It'll be such a start!—The idea!—What *would* they say?"

"Recollect, Peter, I've no interest in persuading you to adopt this course. I do it solely because I believe that it will be advantageous to

yourself, and feel strongly that it becomes a man more to lead those who have gone astray into an honourable path, than to denounce them for being in the path of dishonour."

"I understand," observed Peter, "oh, I quite understand. Well I'll go!—I *will* go! And I'll not say a syllable to them about it. I know they'll miss me—that's one consolation. And serve them right; they have not treated me liberally at all. I accept your offer, Mr. Julian. I'll go by the Kennersly Castle."

"That you have made up your mind to?"

"Firmly: nothing shall shake my resolution."

"If you have no wish to have it shaken, all you have to do is to keep from them."

"Depend upon me, sir, I'll not go near them. They imagine that I can't do without them: we shall see. It isn't like being transported. If I don't *like* the place, I can return when I please."

"Precisely. But I hope that you will find it too advantageous to return until you have realised a fortune. You must not, however, expect to find everything quite so comfortable on going out as if the settlement had been for years established."

"Of course not!—that's out of the question. But the thought of having to put up with a few inconveniences at first shall not deter me. I'm resolved to go: and I'll send a letter to Cavendish, so that it may reach him when I have started, telling him a little of my mind."

"In that, of course, you must use your own discretion. But it's clearly understood that you go?"

"Oh, nothing shall prevent me!"

"Very well; then call upon me to-morrow; and in the interim I'll see what can be done. You had better come early in the morning."

Peter promised to do so, and left in high spirits. He had long wished to shake off the bonds by which Cavendish had held him, soul and body; but had never been able to summon sufficient courage. He had, indeed, frequently turned when trampled upon by the tyrant by whom he had been enslaved, in whose service he had become physically and morally enervated, and whose aim was to keep him continually poor; but, on receiving some apparent mark of favour—conferred by Cavendish as a mere matter of policy—his irresolution invariably prevailed, and he sank again into the most abject submission. Nor would he, had any exertion on his part been required, have made that exertion even in this case, although he was prepared to endure much if he could but get free from the degrading state of slavery in which he had so long been held; but as George had thus offered to do everything for him, as he had promised not only to procure an appointment and to give him a free passage out, but to lend him whatever money he might immediately require, the case was altered; he made up his mind at once to go; and being partially conscious of his weakness, kept aloof from Cavendish altogether.

On calling upon George in the morning, he found that he had not been forgotten: a berth had been obtained from Mac Gregor, a berth in the Customs, for the performance of the duties of which he was to

have twelve guineas per month, and a grant of fifty acres of land. This met his views precisely; and he felt extremely grateful to George, and expressed what he felt in warm terms. He had nothing to do then but to pack up his clothes and go on board; and this, on being strongly urged by George, he prepared to do forthwith, without seeing his former associates, or communicating his intention to any one of them; and when the Kennersly Castle sailed at the time appointed, George saw him safely off with a hundred and fifty other emigrants, the whole of whom, although they shed tears freely on starting, were inspired with the most lively hope.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN WHICH GEORGE ABANDONS THE PRINCE.

A FEW days subsequently to the sailing of the Kennersly Castle, and while George was giving instructions for the fitting up of the ship Skeen, the third vessel bound for the Mosquito-shore, Cavendish honoured him by calling at the office, ostensibly in order to enquire most affectionately after his health, and to congratulate him cordially upon the signal success of the Poyais speculation.

"Ah, my dear fellow!" he exclaimed, as he entered; "proud to see you, Mr. Julian! proud to see you! Salubrious, I see! Never saw you looking so well in all my life! Doing the trick?—eh?—all regularly regular?—glad of it!—genius!—eh?—genius!—safe card!—clever thing! Artful!—very. By the bye, do you happen to know anything of Peter?"

"He has gone to Poyais," replied George.

"Gone to Poyais!" exclaimed Cavendish, blowing out his cheeks to the utmost stretch, and looking as fierce as a man of his weight and size could look. "Gone to—what Peter?—Poyais?"

"He went out in the Kennersly Castle," said George, with the most perfect calmness.

"May the Kenworthy Castle *sink!*" cried Cavendish, clenching his fists, and letting them drop with an energetic action.

"Nay;" said George, "that is a most uncharitable wish."

"Uncharitable, Mr. Julian! From henceforth I'll not know the word. Why, that fellow, that scoundrel, that ungrateful ingrate, has been living upon my charity for years! I have clothed him, I have fed him, I have saved him from rags and starvation!—and here's my return! From this hour I'll have no more charity in me! This is all you get for keeping fellows from starving! This is all you get from your pensioners! This is gratitude, this is! grateful gratitude! Gone to Poyais!—Oh! I shall see him yet—a beggar!—I *hope* I shall—I'm sure

of it!—a beggarly beggar, without a shoe to his foot, or a rag to his back."

While Cavendish was thus bursting forth, and bouncing about the room in a passion so vehement, that as the perspiration flowed with great freedom, he looked like an over-fed maniac bent upon reducing his weight at least a stone, George sat at the table with a most tranquil air, enjoying the rich scene before him: when, however, Cavendish, who really did display great activity, stopped for a moment to pant for more breath, George quietly inquired if he had Peter's interest at heart; and in answer to this inquiry, Cavendish declared that he had, and that the recreant knew it.

"Why then," said George, "do you feel so annoyed? Had you known his intention, you surely would have had no wish to stand in the way of his advancement?"

"What right, Mr. Julian, had he to go without naming it to me?"

"That's a point I must leave you to settle with him."

"And that too, at a time when he knew I most wanted him. He knew it! he knew that he would have been invaluable to me just now."

"I do not believe that he was aware of his value."

"Aware of it!—No; I should think not, indeed; I should *think* not. No; I'm not quite such a donkey, I flatter myself, as to let my tools know their value. If they did, how could you keep them? They'd be taking the very bread out of your mouth! You know, you must know, as a man of the world you must know, the policy of concealing their value from them!"

"The policy I believe to be a bad one," said George; "my impression is, that you have an additional hold upon a man who knows that you appreciate his services and have confidence in him."

"That *may* be your impression, Mr. Julian: experience has taught me the reverse. But that's neither here nor there. The question is, what right had he to go without speaking to me?"

"I don't, of course, feel myself called upon to answer that question; but I never supposed that he had no such right."

"Never supposed it!" echoed Cavendish, frowning ferociously, with the view of alarming George. "Do you mean to say that you never supposed it?"

"Do I mean to *say* that I never supposed it?" said George, smiling sarcastically; "why, of course! Was he bound to solicit *your* permission—to obtain *your* leave, may I ask?"

"He was! But is it possible that *you* could have countenanced the recreant—that *you* could have encouraged him to leave?"

"I not only encouraged him to leave, but I strongly recommended him to do so, and had it not been for my recommendation, he assuredly would not have gone at all!"

"And what was your object?" said Cavendish, who, like the whole of his caste, was easily subdued by a manly straightforward answer.

"My object," replied George, "was to serve him. Perhaps you will next inquire what right I had to do that."

"You are a free man, sir; he was not: he was bound to me by every individual tie which could bind man to man."

"That I doubt. I tell you candidly that I doubt it. You yourself have declared that you used him but as a tool; and that your policy was to make him believe that he was valueless, when his services were in reality of great value. I hate ingratitude, sir, as much as any man can; but you must not expect men to be grateful for being degraded."

"I have no wish to quarrel with you, Mr. Julian," said Cavendish, pompously; "Oh dear no, not the least in life."

"I am glad to hear it:—if you had, that wish would be but to a very inconsiderable extent gratified."

"But I must say," continued Mr. Cavendish, "that I consider it anything but the ticket to victimise those in the ring."

"If you explain what you mean in intelligible language," said George, "I don't think that I shall be at a loss for an answer."

"Well then, Mr. Julian, in other words, let me tell you that you have acted most unfairly in making him one of your victims."

"One of my victims!" said George, smiling. "What I have done, I have done solely with a view to his advantage."

"Why, what's a poor fool like that to do out there when the bubble shall have burst?"

"The bubble!—what bubble?"

"Why this Poyaisian bubble, of course."

"I should really recommend you," said George, still smiling, "to hold none of the shares."

"*Hold* them! I've bought and sold many, of course, as a mere matter of business; but compel me to hold them, and I wouldn't give twopence for the lot."

"And you do really conceive it to be a bubble?"

"Conceive it to be one?—I know it! What else can it be? It's cleverly managed, of course. Oh, I'll give you due credit for that."

"Well, that is something; I beg to acknowledge the compliment. I at all times appreciate politeness."

"Of course *you* know nothing about its being a dodge?"

"It is sufficient that *you* know it: at all events, sufficient for yourself."

"You are certainly a clever fellow, Mr. Julian; I've always said that—an out-and-out clever fellow."

"Again, Mr. Cavendish, I thank you."

"You'd make almost any one believe that you really knew nothing at all about it, or at least that you fancied it all on the square; but it won't do, you know, Mr. Julian."

"But it has done."

"For many, but never for me; although I confess that even I might have been equally deceived if the thing had been managed entirely by you. And that's the worst of having a fool for a confederate, and especially such a fool as Mac Gregor. Whose money does he fancy men of the world think he's spending?—where does it all come from?—and how much will be left when he has had his full swing? The thing

was well grounded, I grant; but he's a fool—as if he expected people *never* to open their eyes."

"But did you not say, just now, that the affair had been cleverly managed?"

"I did; and so it has, as far as you are concerned. It must have been, or his vanity would before this have spoiled it. But, of course, the first dividend will be paid?"

"Why, surely, *you* know; I marvel that a man who knows so much should ask me that."

"Of course, it will though, as a draw; and a second, too, if another loan can be raised upon the strength of it. Ah, Mr. Julian, you should have had me with you. We'd have made it something; it's a clever thing murdered."

"Then, on the whole, you think that Peter's rather in for it?"

"In for it! If he should ever come back at all, I shall see him come back barefoot; and I shall glory in it. Nothing could give me greater pleasure. Oh, I shall see him yet, I hope, a ragged beggar in tatters."

"Well," said George, rising, for he perceived that Mr. Cavendish was about to become hot again, "let me advise you, before you go, to have nothing more to do with these Poyais bonds."

"Don't alarm yourself at all on my account, Mr. Julian; you may safely take your oath that I know what's what within a little."

At this moment George thought of bringing out the wine, and asking Cavendish to drink success to Peter; but as he the next moment imagined that it might be construed into a wish to propitiate the man, he allowed him to go away empty.

He had, however, no sooner taken his departure, than George, who had treated the matter lightly in his presence, sat down to reflect upon all he had said having reference to Mac Gregor. Who supported the style in which he lived? Whose money was he squandering away? These questions had certainly occurred to him before; but the suspicions they had created had always been removed by Mac Gregor, who had made him believe that style was essential to the success of the scheme, and that his expenses were comparatively inconsiderable. He had, therefore, gone on from week to week, and from month to month, hoping, until he felt, whenever suspicions arose, that they would prove to be baseless, and especially as no doubt on the subject of Mac Gregor's intentions had ever been, to his knowledge, entertained by any one else; but now that he knew that doubts were entertained by others, and had heard them unequivocally expressed, he felt himself bound to have the honourable designs of Mac Gregor proved before he consented to stir another step.

Engaged as he had been from morning till night drawing up advertisements, answering correspondents, treating with contractors, having interviews with those who wished to emigrate, and so on, he had had no time to attend to the accounts; nor had he in fact felt it to be necessary for him to do so, they having from the commencement been placed under the sole superintendence of Mac Gregor; but feeling it

now to be essential to the defence of his own reputation that he should enter into those accounts minutely, with the view of proving beyond all dispute, whether the doubts which he and others entertained were well founded or not, he resolved, to the exclusion of all other business, to have the whole matter placed fairly before him.

Having, by an immediate reference to his books, obtained the balance between the receipts and the expenditure as far as he had been concerned, he lost no time in having a private interview with Mac Gregor, who ominously locked up his books as George entered.

"Well, Mr. Julian," said he, extending his hand; "and how are things going on? Well as usual? Any thing new?"

"Yes," replied George; "I have heard a report, which to me is quite new."

"Indeed! What is it?—any thing affecting us?"

"Deeply; or one which will affect us deeply if it be not at once checked. It is said," continued George, looking intently at Mac Gregor, "that the Poyais speculation is neither more nor less than a swindle."

"Pooh!—Absurd, Mr. Julian!—Absurd! It cannot affect us, sir.—All we have to do is to treat it with contempt."

"It is a report," said George, "which must not be treated with contempt: we must at least have the means at our command of proving it to be unfounded."

"Well, we have those means at our command! But should we heed a report so absurd, when the public in general, including the bondholders, are satisfied?"

"The public in general, including the bondholders, believe that you have private resources."

"Still harping on the subject of my expenditure, Mr. Julian! Have I not proved to you again and again, that it is not a tithe of what it appears to be?"

"It is true you have told me so again and again, but have given no proof."

"Is not my word of honour sufficient?"

"Whatever confidence men of business may have in each other, they depend for security more upon figures than upon honour. It is not to be said that a man doubts the honour of his partner because he may wish to refer to books which are in that partner's keeping."

"Am I to understand, Mr. Julian, that you wish to refer to *my* books?"

"Certainly, that is my wish, not only in order to satisfy myself that there exists no foundation for this report, but that I may be in a position to check it."

"Are you not now in a position to check it?"

"I am not."

"Then leave it to me, Mr. Julian: I'll check it."

"But how?"

"By treating it, sir, with the contempt it deserves."

"That will not be effectual: the thing must be proved."

"Let the onus of proof rest with them."

"And run the risk of having all confidence destroyed?"

"If the report should gain ground, what have we to do but to meet the charge by a plain, direct, and positive denial?"

"Which we can do—fairly and with truth?"

"Have you any doubt on the subject?"

"I *have*, Mac Gregor! I will not mince the matter, nor will I suffer pseudo-delicacy to stand between me and what I conceive to be my duty as a man. I *have* doubts!—doubts which, if confirmed, will induce me to abandon this project on the instant; but if they be removed, no man shall adhere to you more firmly than I will: I'll go hand in hand, heart and soul with you, Mac Gregor, in order to accomplish the object in view."

"Then be assured, Mr. Julian, that these doubts have no real foundation."

"Of that I must be assured."

"And being assured, let us continue to go on as we began, in mutual confidence, and brilliant success, sir, will be sure to crown our efforts. But come! let us have a glass of wine together, and drown this business in eternal oblivion!"

"You spoke," said George, "of my being assured: let me but be assured, and in oblivion all doubts on the subject *shall* be drowned; but I cannot be assured by a word."

"You are a droll fellow, Julian!—a very droll fellow; but I respect you the more, because I know that you have a most excellent heart. But come, come, we mustn't have any more to say on this subject. It will look like a quarrel; and you are the last man in the world with whom I should wish to have any misunderstanding: we'll therefore say no more about it. Will you dine with me to-day?"

"I will, on one condition."

"Nonsense about conditions! The fact is, we must go home together, and spend a merry evening."

"Shall we be alone?"

"Why no, we shall not be exactly alone. There will be Colonel James, Captain Johnson, Lieutenant Scoles, and several others; but they are all splendid fellows!—you'll be delighted."

"Well, then, in order that I may enjoy myself perfectly, let us see exactly how we stand. It can all be done in a very few minutes. In the first place, how much have you got at the banker's?"

"Of what possible importance can that be now?"

"It is of importance, Mac Gregor, that I should know."

"Absurd! Don't trouble your head about anything of the kind. You have, I am sure, quite enough to attend to already. Leave that to me, Julian; I'll manage that. Come, come! we must say no more about it."

"Mac Gregor, you have no objection to let me see the banker's book?"

"Objection!—What possible objection can I have?"

"Surely none: therefore, at once let me see it."

"But it has not been made up for some days."

"Well, that will be of little importance: you have not had occasion to draw much since the Kennersly Castle sailed: let us see how we stood when it was last made up."

"Mr. Julian," said Mac Gregor, with a majestic air, "have you any desire to insult me?"

"None whatever," replied George; "but I *must* be satisfied upon this one point."

"I do not recognise your right to know how much I have at the banker's."

"You do not! Mac Gregor, at our very first interview you pledged me your honour as a man, that, throughout this affair, your adherence to a strictly just course should be firm; that you would not on any point deceive me; and that, as far at least as I might be concerned, your conduct should be characterised by candour. *Have* you forgotten that pledge?"

"No!"

"Then why not redeem it?"

"Because I think it monstrous that you should come to me and say, 'Show me your banker's-book! I doubt your honour and the honesty of your intentions! I believe you to be a scoundrel! a swindler! satisfy me instantly that you are not!'"

"Mac Gregor!" said George, firmly, "these were not my words. But put what construction you may upon my demand, torture it as you please, it is my demand still."

"But what right have you to make it? All you have to do is to manage the bonds, the correspondence, the emigrants, the advertisements and so on, and to deduct your expenses from the receipts. Continue to do that, Mr. Julian, and leave the rest to me."

"But I will *not* leave the rest to you, and still be connected with you. I have a right, an indisputable right to know whether your designs are strictly honourable or not. It is a point, Mac Gregor, upon which I *will* be satisfied! and one word, one single word will be sufficient to afford me all the satisfaction I demand. Will you or will you not, Mac Gregor, let me see how you stand at the banker's?"

"You have no right to ask it!"

"Waving now all considerations having reference to my right, will you show me the banker's-book?"

"No!"

"Then I am satisfied. Mac Gregor, you have deceived me! I feel that you have! I am sure of it! Where is your boasted honour now? Shame, Mac Gregor!—shame! Take back the paltry bauble you gave me. To night, sir, the office shall be permanently closed, and no more from this hour will *I* have to do with His Highness the Prince of Poyais!"

"You had better reflect, Mr. Julian, upon the step you are about to take."

"I have, Mac Gregor, sufficiently reflected: although my words are warm, my judgment is cool: although I feel most indignant at having been deceived, that feeling does not interfere at all with my discretion."

"But you have no proof of having been deceived!"

"It is abundantly proved by your refusal to produce the book in question. What objection could you possibly have if your designs were in reality just? No; Mac Gregor, I was a fool to confide in you at all, but having now discovered my folly, I'll no longer be a party to a project so base. I leave you; and I do so with the utmost scorn, not alone because *I* have been deceived, but because you have deluded those poor wretched emigrants, ruined their prospects, and blighted their every earthly hope."

"Beware how you proceed, Mr. Julian! Let me advise you to beware! You *mean* to shut up the office?"

"I do."

"Do it!—at your peril!"

"At my peril!" echoed George contemptuously, "In less than ten minutes the office will be closed!"

He then left Mac Gregor, and in less than ten minutes the office *was* closed, and having thus made all secure, he and Fred went to call upon Bull.

On their way Mac Gregor's carriage dashed past; but they did not return: they proceeded direct to Bull's office, and having ascertained that he had just gone on 'Change, they went there and saw him. They had scarcely, however, spoken a word on the subject before Mac Gregor made his appearance, when, as George expressed a wish to avoid him, Bull was seized in an instant with so violent a tremor that he was almost unable to stand.

"Bu-bu-bu-but," said he, "what does it mean? I am alarmed I am—very much alarmed. Dear—bless my life—come along, come along; dear me, though, come along back to the office."

To the office they accordingly returned, and when the clerk had informed them that Mac Gregor had been there, and had been told that George had just gone on 'Change, they went into Bull's private room, where George at once explained the substance of all that had occurred, and, in doing so, threw poor Bull into a state of excitement the most painful that can well be conceived.

"I am ruined, my dear boy, ruined!" he cried, trembling piteously as the big tears rolled down his cheeks. "Nothing can save me now—nothing—nothing. Fifty bonds—five thousand pounds gone for ever!—lost!—utterly lost! What am I to do—what can I do—what shall I do? Ruination stares me in the face!—starvation!—madness!"

"Hush!" cried George, who at this moment heard Mac Gregor's voice in the outer office. "Be calm!—trust to me!—do not despair!"

The clerk now entered to announce Mac Gregor, who immediately afterwards appeared, trembling with almost as much violence as Bull himself.

"Well, Mr. Julian," said he, "so you have carried your threat, I find, into execution."

"I have," returned George, with his usual firmness.

"And you do not intend to open the office to-morrow?"

"I do not."

"May I ask what your next step will be?"

"That will depend upon circumstances, entirely."

"Will it be to destroy the speculation?"

"The same answer will equally apply. I *can* do it, Mac Gregor. I need not explain how. It is sufficient for you to know that I can."

"And what will you gain by it? I could not have supposed it possible, Mr. Julian: I could not have believed that your disposition was revengeful."

"Nor is it."

"Then why can we not go on pleasantly, as heretofore?"

"Because, Mac Gregor, I feel that you have basely deceived me."

"Do not be rash," interposed Bull, tremulously, "do not, pray do not be rash."

"You mistake me," returned George, "I am not rash."

"What if I have been extravagant?" said Mac Gregor; "it has been solely with the view of giving *éclat* to our proceedings. You jump at conclusions, Mr. Julian. However, to prove to you that *I* am not vindictive, here's my hand. It will be better for all concerned that we forget what has passed, and go on again as usual."

"Yes, yes! that is just my opinion," said Bull; "it will be better for us all, it will, infinitely better."

"I have been deceived once," said George; "I think that quite sufficient."

"But it mustn't get wind, my dear boy," rejoined Bull; "it will be ruination—it mustn't get wind."

"It must and shall be known, and that immediately, too, if the condition I have to propose be not complied with."

"What is that condition?" enquired Mac Gregor.

"That the bonds held by Bull be taken back at the cost price, and a cheque for the amount given at once.

"And if I refuse to do this, you will blow the whole affair, and thus involve your own friend without giving him the slightest opportunity of selling?"

"Oh, you will not do that," exclaimed Bull; "dear, you will not do that—I shall be ruined, my dear boy, ruined."

"I'll no longer," said George, "be a party to the sale of that which I know to be valueless. You, Mac Gregor, would hang a man for uttering the counterfeit representative of a shilling, knowing it to be a counterfeit, and yet you would have Bull pass these bonds at their nominal value, conscious of their being of no value at all."

"But ruination stares me in the face," cried Bull; "consider that."

"If," said Mac Gregor, "I take the bonds back, will you rejoin me?"

"Yes, do," urged Bull, "my dear boy, do; for my sake do—pray do

"No!" replied George, "I'll have nothing more to do with a transaction so base."

"Will you, then, consent to be silent on the subject?"

"Yes, yes, he will," cried Bull, "I'll guarantee that he will; I know he will; I'll answer for it. Will you not?"

"For your sake," replied George, "I will."

"I *knew* he would. Didn't I tell you so?—I knew it. Here they are, here they are; fifty of them—count them yourself, but they are all correct, all quite correct. Here's the price, here, you see, here; I only want you to take them back for a time, you know, for a time—you and I shall have other transactions, we shall—you know it's only to satisfy him.

"I feel," said Mac Gregor, "that I can trust you, Julian, although you cannot trust me."

"*I* have never deceived *you*, Mac Gregor," replied George.

"Well, well, never mind now," cried Bull, trembling with impatience; "we'll settle all that by and by, we will. One thing at a time; yes—there—come now, let's arrange this first;—yes—it can make no difference to you—you can sell them in the market, you know,—somebody else will have them—you won't lose, you won't;—fifty of them—fifty—you find fifty?"

Mac Gregor made no reply, but drew a cheque for the amount; and having done so, inquired who were Bull's bankers.

"Don't cross it—please—thank you!" cried Bull; "yes — don't cross it—yes—that will do nicely."

"You doubt, I suppose, that I have even *so* much in hand?"

"Oh, by no means! Oh dear, not at all!"

"You had better present it at once, and be satisfied."

"Bless my life, no—unless you wish it!"

"Oh, it matters not to me."

"Yes—exactly—I'll do as you desire;—yes, Frederick, my dear boy,—just run—yes—there—bring it short—you know, short. Be *quick!*" he energetically whispered, having pushed Fred fairly out of the office. "Run like *lightning* all the way there and back—like *lightning!*"

"And now, Mr. Julian," said Mac Gregor, "I presume that all connexion between us is at an end?"

"It is," replied George.

"Have you any objection to give up the office?"

"No. I shall be there in the morning at eleven; and when the accounts have been arranged, which can be done in an hour, I wash my hands of the whole affair: you can then have possession if you please."

"And can nothing induce you to rejoin me?"

"Nothing!"

"Very well. I am sorry for it; but must do the best I can."

"But—but—but," stammered Bull, who had been, up to that moment, half dead with suspense; "when—when do you think you shall hear from Poyais?"

"Do not be alarmed, Mr. Bull," said Mac Gregor, who saw that the question was put to detain him, "I *shall* not leave until your messenger returns."

George smiled, but all were silent until Fred came in, when Mac Gregor perceiving that Bull was quite satisfied, coldly withdrew.

The very instant he had left, however, Bull started up in a state of ecstasy; he laughed and danced about, and cut the most extraordinary capers ever witnessed on *any* stage, British or foreign.

"You have been my *salvation!*" he cried—"my salvation! You're a good fellow—a fine fellow—a fine noble fellow!—I'm so delighted! —But come, you must dine with me to-day, you and Fred, and I'll treat you to a ride, I will, all the way home, and I'll stand some champagne, there!—champagne!—Come," he added, locking his arms tightly in theirs, and fairly pulling them out of the office, "Come! let us all go and be jolly!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE REGISTER.

It may by possibility be objected that George was not justified strictly in consenting to be silent on the subject when he believed that the designs of Mac Gregor were unjust, even though his consent were given with a view to save his friend Bull from loss; but when the circumstances under which that consent was obtained, are reconsidered, his justification, it is apprehended, will be in the judgment of most men complete; inasmuch as in the first place it must be perceived that although his suspicions of Mac Gregor's delinquency had been sufficiently confirmed to establish his own conviction, he had no direct proof; and in the second, it must not be forgotten that there was at that period a fine old English fiction, entituled the Law of Libel, extant, with many illustrations on brass.

It will perhaps be as well for the benefit of the rising generation to explain that this fiction was of a most extraordinary character. It was conceived with a view to the suppression of truth; it set forth that the apothegm, *magna est veritas, et prævalebit*, was all dreadful nonsense; that if truth be disagreeable, it ought not to be told, and that he who published it on a large scale was more to be condemned than he who dealt out the article in driblets; in other words, that he was the greatest criminal who uttered the greatest truth, if its utterance were to any individual unpleasant. The philanthropy which formed the basis of this remarkable fiction, was therefore extremely comprehensive, and being so it was at the time much admired, because its tendency was to check the career of those who were in the habit of telling truths, and hence the community in the aggregate concurring, and very naturally, that "truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," would be excessively monotonous, flew to the practice of telling falsehoods in preference, a practice which has been on the increase ever since.

The fear of the law of libel, however, would not have induced George to consent to be silent on the subject had he been in a position to put the public effectually on their guard; he would have felt himself bound as a man to expose Mac Gregor, had he possessed any legal proof to

back the exposition; but he knew him sufficiently well to know that if he denounced him publicly as a swindler, he would at once bring his action for a libel which could not be legally justified, and which would therefore tend to increase the evil, inasmuch as, in the eyes of the world, his character as an honourable man would be what in all such cases is facetiously termed "vindicated;" which vindication would re-inspire public confidence, and enable him to take a more comprehensive swing. It was therefore that George consented to be silent on the subject; it was therefore that he promised to give up possession of the office, which he did on the following morning, and washed his hands of the whole affair, but resolved still to watch its progress narrowly.

From the commencement of this speculation he had been so deeply and so constantly engaged, that almost everything else had been neglected; but being now again a perfectly free man, he returned to those matters which had previously occupied his attention, and which had been so unprofitably set aside.

The first thing to which he devoted himself was Fred's claim, which, after having examined the whole of the papers, he determined to prosecute, for the case appeared to him to be so perfectly clear and straightforward, that while no doubt whatever could exist on the subject of Fred's right, he was surprised that the record of the marriage of Benjamin Broadbridge, his grandfather, the only thing required to establish the claim legally had never been found. He felt sure that there was such a record: the papers sufficiently convinced him of that, and hence, conceiving that it must have been in some way overlooked, he resolved to examine the register himself.

The church, at which it was evident this marriage had taken place, was situated in an obscure but beautiful village in the county of Sussex, to which, accompanied by Fred, George proceeded.

On reaching the town adjacent, which they did in a few hours by coach, they put up at the principal inn, where they had an early dinner, and then started off to walk over the fields towards the village, a walk which George highly enjoyed. Occupied so closely as he had been for months before, breathing that which seemed to be, compared with the breath of life he then inhaled, the breath of death, he felt inspired with peculiarly pleasing sensations—the air was so soft and so pure, while the scene was so tranquil, so lovely. To him the very silence which prevailed was enchanting; and he walked or rather strolled at a distance from Fred with a spirit as calm as the scene.

On coming within sight of the village-church they saw a shepherd, a remarkably fine old man, whose hair, upon which he evidently prided himself, hung over his shoulders like silken fringe, sitting upon a hillock, and as he sat with his chin resting firmly upon his hands, which in turn were supported by his stick, he seemed to be absorbed in deep reflection. George, being somewhat in advance, was the first to approach him, and as he did so the old man rose. and having raised his hat, said, without the slightest apparent effort—

"Your servant, sir; a charming day
For the larks to sing and the lambs to play,

For the lambs to play, and the sheep to bleat,
And the grass as you walk to grow under your feet."

"Poetical, I perceive," observed George.

"What you perceive
You may believe,"

returned the shepherd, adding promptly,

"A poet I am: I was born a poet,
And nature urges me thus to show it.
And nature is kind, sir: even the blind
Cannot fail to perceive that nature is kind.
They perceive it with gratitude, too, for they know,
That to those who most need it most kindness she'll show."

"Have you been a shepherd long?"

"From my earliest youth,
And that's the truth."

"And you are fond of the occupation, of course?"

"Most men will their happiness mar,
Because they happen to be what they are.
But being a shepherd, I am content
A shepherd to be: as all are sent
To carry out some great design,
Whate'er our lot we should never repine.
If all men could be taught to know
How from contentment blessings flow;
If they would only check the range
Of their desire for constant change,
Bless what they have and feel they need
No more, they would be wise indeed."

"Then, farewell enterprise—farewell ambition!" thought George; who, however, not wishing to shake the faith from which the old man evidently derived much comfort, left the doctrine as completely undisputed as if he had felt it to be beyond dispute. "You are married, I presume?" he enquired.

"Married I am; by the blessing of God!
And that in the mouths of some men would sound odd."

"Very true," said George—"very true."

"But I have cause for saying this,
For we have lived in a state of bliss.
Our children, too, have turned out well,
And they all live to hear our funeral knell."

"Have you many?"

"The number, sir, when all are told,
Is the same as the number of years I'm old."

"You must have began life early," said George, who did not profess to understand this at all.

"It may seem strained
Until I've explained.
In the first place, then, my wife had twenty,
And that perhaps you'll say was plenty;

But then that twenty had sixty more,
Which like my age is just fourscore.
But I've of children another stock,
These are my children here—my flock.
And well they know their pastor's call;
For, being their pastor I've christened them all.
Each has a name, and at my command
'Twill raise its voice
As if to rejoice,
And bound up to me to lick my hand.
Point one out, and I'll show you how
'Twill run like a loving child up to me now."

"There's a lamb with a black eye," said George, indicating one in the midst of the flock.

"Fanny! Fanny! Fanny! here!
Come to me, Fanny! come without fear!"

And in an instant the identical lamb pointed out bounded up to be caressed. George and Fred were amazed. They could scarcely have conceived it to be possible; but in order to place the thing beyond all doubt, they pointed to others which in turn came like children.

"How do you know one from the other?" enquired George, "do you mark them?"

"They're marked by nature; human aid
Is not required. As men are made,
Varying in feature, so are they.
No two in a flock of a thousand: nay
In a flock of a million, have faces alike,—
A fact which never can fail to strike.
But blindfold me and I can tell
Each from the others equally well,
For the voice of each has a different tone,
Which to me is of course just about as well known."

"Well;" said George, "you have certainly surprised me, not only by the facts which appear, but by the style in which the knowledge of those facts has been imparted. Get something to drink," he added, giving the shepherd half-a-crown, which the old man with a grateful expression received, and said,

"Sir, I thank you for this half-crown.
Success to you, sir, both in country and town.
What if the coin had been but a shilling,
To take it you'd have found me willing;
Nay, had it been a sixpence merely,
I should have thanked you as sincerely."

"What an extraordinary character," said George, as they pursued their way towards the village.

"I have frequently seen him before," observed Fred, "but I had no idea of his being so eccentric. He evidently prides himself upon his rhymes."

"And he makes them, too, with great facility. But," he added, directing Fred's attention to some scaffolding by which the entrance of the church was surrounded, "we shall have a dusty job it appears: the church is undergoing repair."

On their arrival, however, they ascertained that during the repairs the books were kept at the cottage of the curate, to which, following the direction of one of the workmen, they proceeded forthwith.

As they approached this cottage, which, though small, was exceedingly unique and picturesque, they were struck with the appearance of a finely formed girl, walking pensively in the garden by which the cottage was surrounded, occasionally stopping, apparently to sigh, and then proceeding with slow and irregular steps round a circular bed of white roses. Her countenance, pale as death, seemed to be rigid as marble; and while her jet black hair reached in graceful glossy ringlets to her waist, and her dress, which was of itself of the purest white, appeared to derive additional purity from the rays of the sun, she wore a fixed expression, so sad, that it seemed to be the index of a broken bleeding heart.

"Poor girl!" exclaimed George, on reaching the garden-gate. "Let us be cautious. We must not approach too abruptly."

In an instant, although this was said but in a whisper, she started, and on beholding George, uttered a scream of joy, flew to him wildly, and fell upon his neck.

George stood as if struck with paralysis. What it could mean he was unable to conjecture. As the curate however rushed into the garden the next moment, he soon perceived how the case stood.

"Lydia, my child!" said the venerable curate, as he endeavoured with gentleness to disengage her arms. "My dear child! Lydia! Lydia!"

But she still clung to George, who now sustained her as, panting with rapture, she nestled in his breast.

"A poor witless girl, sir," continued the curate mournfully—"harmless, but witless."

"Hush!" whispered Lydia, who now raised her head, "Hush!—why father, this is Charles! my own Charles! Do you not know him? Dear Charles;" she added, turning to George, with an affectionate smile, and passing her hand over his brow. "You must leave me no more!—no more, dear Charles!—no more!—I will not part with you again!—I will cling to you thus, Charles, for ever! But, my love, you do not speak to me! Was it not cruel to keep so long away? Embrace me, Charles; you have not kissed me yet!"

"Poor girl," said George, "I grieve to see you thus. Come, let me lead you in."

"That voice!" she exclaimed, in a sharp, thrilling whisper. "That is not his voice!—Father!—Father!—Father!" she added, leaving George, and clasping the curate. "Did you hear? But it *is* my Charles, father? O yes! I will give you a rose. Not one has been plucked since you left. They have bloomed and withered and bloomed again since then; but not one has been plucked. I am always with them; they know me, Charles, and love me too as I love them. They

smile with me when I am gay; it is only when they see me sad that they grieve and droop and die. But they are smiling now; I know they are. The prettiest will be proud to kiss you. Stay, stay, do not come near; the rest would be jealous if they were to know for whom I pluck the sweetest."

"I am sorry, indeed, to see this," said George, as Lydia flew to the circular bed.

"It is sad, very sad," returned the curate. "But your object in honouring me with this visit—"

"Is to examine the register. The books, I understand are in your possession."

"They are," said the curate. "Step this way."

Before they had reached the cottage-door, however, Lydia returned, and having placed the rose she had plucked in George's bosom, she locked her arm fondly in his, and led the way.

On entering the little parlour, which was furnished with singular neatness, George explained the object he had in view more precisely, and when the register had been produced and placed before him, the curate tried to prevail upon Lydia to withdraw; but she begged with so much earnestness to be permitted to remain, that eventually she and her father sat at the window, while George and Fred were carefully examining the book.

They first looked through the index, but nothing bearing any resemblance to the name of Broadbridge could be found. They then went through the body of the book; but no—they were unable still to find the name of Broadbridge. Again they looked through it, and again, and it being to George abundantly manifest that the name was not there, he was about to relinquish the search, when Lydia, who had been watching his countenance intently, whispered, "Father! father! come with me! come, father, come!"

The affectionate old man at once allowed himself to be led by her into the garden; but in an instant she returned, and placing her lips to George's ear, whispered hastily "You may take it home again—yes, dear, yes; you may have it again to-night."

"Have what, my dear girl?"

"Hush!—the book, the book, the book! I will keep it quite secret: I'll not say a word—not a word. You shall have it, dear—hush!" she added, raising her hand to enjoin silence as she heard her father's footsteps at the door, when she returned to the seat she had previously occupied and looked as if no syllable had been uttered.

George weighed this little incident calmly in his mind. He felt convinced that it had some meaning, and, although he was unable to make anything of it, he was induced to examine the book once more. He was, however, equally unsuccessful; the name of Broadbridge was not to be found, and hence, in the full conviction that further search would be useless, the register was closed.

"We shall be proud, sir, to see you at our quarters," said George, on drawing the venerable curate aside, "if you will favour us with your company this evening."

"I thank you, but I seldom, very seldom, go into society."

"We should indeed be most happy if you would join us."

"You will find me, sir, but a dull companion; but I appreciate your kindness and will come."

"Shall we walk together?"

"As you please," replied the reverend gentleman; "It will perhaps be, under the circumstances, better."

"But you will not leave me?" cried Lydia, clinging again to George. "Pray—pray, do not leave me. I cannot let you go, dear—indeed you must not go."

"But for a time, my dear girl," said George soothingly; "but for a time."

"Oh, I have a thousand things to say to you. Stay with me, dear—I will not love you, Charles, if you are cruel! But, ah! you do not mean to leave, I know you do not—you were but jesting. Say that you were out jesting—that you will not go, and I will love you *so* dearly!"

"Lydia, my child," said the curate, "he must leave you now; but I shall be with him, you know, my love—I shall be with him."

"Father," she whispered, taking him aside, "bring him back with you; do not let him quit your sight. Be sure of it, my father—be quite sure of that! But, oh, you will return to me?" she added, addressing George, "you will surely return to your own dear Lydia? All has been prepared: everything is now in perfect readiness. To-morrow is the day, you know—to-morrow. We shall be so happy, I could cry with joy; but I will not—no, there must be no weeping. But, to-morrow—be sure you remember to-morrow"

"I will," replied George. "Be assured that to-morrow shall not be forgotten. Adieu!" he added, endeavouring to disengage himself from her, "Adieu!"

Lydia looked at him earnestly for a moment and then said "Why are you so cool?—when did you ever before part from me so, dear Charles? Why do you not kiss me?"

George glanced at her father, and as he saw him nod approvingly he kissed her brow, bade her again be assured that the morrow should be remembered, and, having resigned her to the care of an elderly female, who officiated as housekeeper, he and Fred left the cottage with their reverend friend.

As they walked from the village, George entered into a full explanation of all the circumstances connected with Fred's claim; but as the marriage in question had taken place nearly three quarters of a century before, the curate could give no information on the subject; nor did he remember to have heard the name of Broadbridge ever mentioned in the village. The case, therefore, appeared to be perfectly hopeless: the claim could not be legally established without a certificate of this marriage, and it was then quite clear that no record of it was to be found.

On reaching the inn at which George had put up they were shown into a snug private room, and entered freely upon the principal topics of the day, with the bearings of which, however, the reverend gentle-

man was not at all conversant. The object of George was, therefore, to entertain him, and in this, with the aid of Fred, he so completely succeeded, that the good old man ventured to declare, that he should prize it above all earthly wealth were it to please God in his mercy to restore his poor girl that she might again appreciate *such* conversation

This was an opportunity which George did not fail to embrace: he had been anxious to mention the subject, but was apprehensive that in doing so he might inflict pain; as however it had been alluded to, he felt himself justified in touching, with all the delicacy of which he was capable, upon his extraordinary reception that day at the cottage.

"Poor child!" said the curate; "she believes you still to be the man whose dishonourable conduct deprived her of reason; may Heaven forgive him!"

"Has she been long thus afflicted?" enquired George.

"Nearly twelve months, alas! You are not much unlike him in figure."

"Does he reside in the neighbourhood?"

"Oh, no; he lives somewhere in London, but I have never been able to ascertain where. He gave me what he called his address, but on making enquiries I found that the persons there knew nothing of him."

"What is his name?"

"Charles Richardson he said, but I have reason to believe that that name was assumed."

"May I ask in what way you became acquainted with him?"

"He came down as you have come, to look at the register. I knew nothing of him."

"To look at the register!" echoed George. "How long did he remain?"

"Scarcely an hour when he came with that object in view. But he returned a few days after that with the view of paying his addresses to my child. He remained on that occasion ten days."

"And did he then wish to look at the register?"

"No; after the first visit the books were never named. His object was solely to declare his attachment to my poor girl, of whom he professed to be deeply enamoured, which I as a father, well knowing her excellent qualities, did not deem unnatural; and although I at first gave him no encouragement, he being a perfect stranger, he succeeded so completely in gaining her affections, that in order to secure her happiness, I eventually consented to receive him, provided he gave such references as might convince me of his being a man of good moral character and respectably connected. On this subject he assured me that I should be perfectly satisfied, and urged me to return with him to London, in order that I might see that his character and station in society had not been misrepresented. With this apparently frank and honourable conduct I was pleased, and consented to accompany him, and he dined

with us daily, and poor Lydia was happy in viewing the bright prospects he portrayed, not only for herself, but for me, he having stated that he had amply sufficient influence with the Archbishop of Canterbury to procure for me immediate promotion. Well, sir, the marriage-day was fixed, and we started by the coach for London, leaving poor Lydia to prepare for the consummation of her fondest hopes; but on our arrival in town, he requested me to remain for one moment in the coach-office, while he procured a vehicle to take us to his house, when he walked out of the yard, with his small portmanteau, all the luggage he had, in his hand, and I have never, sir, either seen or heard of him since. I remained in the office for more than two hours, and then left particular instructions with the persons in attendance to inform any one who might enquire for me, that I might be found in the coffee-room of the inn; but no such enquiry was made, and when in the morning I found that the address which he had given me was false, I returned to poor Lydia, whom the news so shocked, that after a violent paroxysm of grief she sank into an afflicting state of melancholic gloom, from which, alas! she has never recovered."

"He must have been a most unprincipled fellow," said George.

"He *must* have been, for on my return the proprietor of the inn at which he was staying down here, put a bill into my hands of fifteen pounds ten shillings, which the worthless person had told him I insisted upon paying, which was perfectly false! It is true, I remember to have said, just as we were on the point of starting, 'Yes, yes, let it be till I return,' but I said that in consequence of his having told me that he had had some little matter that morning, for which it was not worth while to change: I had certainly no idea that I had thus become answerable for such an amount. However, I paid it by instalments; but he ought to have been ashamed of himself, knowing my circumstances so well as he did."

"But what could have been his object in coming down a second time? It surely could not have been for the cowardly gratification of trifling with the affections of that poor girl?"

"It may seem uncharitable, I know that it may, but I believe him to be wicked enough for anything."

"But my impression is, that he had some latent object. He never alluded to the register, you say, after his first visit?"

"Never."

"Are these books ever out of your possession?"

"No; whether in the vestry or at the cottage, they are always locked up, and I have the keys which I never entrust to any one for a moment."

"Do you happen to remember where the books were at the time?"

"Oh, yes, they were at the cottage. I remember that the church was then as it is now undergoing repair, and when the workmen are about—and they frequently are, for the church is very old and dilapidated—I invariably have the books home."

"Then without your knowledge, he could not have got to this register?"

"Oh, not by any possibility. Besides, as I said before, he never expressed a wish to see them: he never even alluded to them in any way after his first visit."

"Fred," said George, "what sort of a man is your cousin Joseph?"

"A short, stout, dark-looking person," replied Fred.

"Then, of course, *he* could not have been the man. Do you know any one with whom he is connected at all like me?"

"No," replied Fred, "I know of no one to whom you bear the slightest resemblance."

"I must trouble you," said George, "to let me look at that book again to-morrow."

"Oh, by all means," returned the curate.

"I am not at all satisfied. There is something mysterious about the conduct of this man. His actions are those of a professional swindler, and while I feel quite convinced that he would never remain here so long without an object, I cannot believe that the object proposed was solely that of trifling with your daughter's affections. I must, therefore, again trouble you in the morning. What time shall we come?"

"Suit your own convenience; but if you will name the time, I will endeavour to get Lydia out of the way, that she may not again annoy you."

"Oh, she will not in the slightest degree annoy us. However, I beg that you will use your own discretion: we shall do ourselves the pleasure of being with you at eleven."

The subject was then dropped, and as the reverend gentleman soon after expressed himself anxious to take leave for the night, they insisted upon accompanying him at least half the distance, which they did, and then returned to the inn.

Usually, George went to sleep almost immediately after he retired, and continued to sleep soundly until it was time for him to rise; but on this particular night he could not sleep at all: he turned and twisted about, and re-adjusted the pillows, and tried to seduce himself into the belief that he was just dropping off; but, no; nothing would do: whether his knees were up or down, his arms in or out, his pillows high or low, he could not go to sleep. This puzzled him rather: he couldn't understand it: he hadn't been used to it; but as it occurred to him eventually, that if a man couldn't go to sleep he couldn't—which is rather a remarkable fact, as sleep is too independent of the will to be forced—he sat up in bed, wedged the pillows between the bolster and his back, and then calmly reviewed all that had transpired during the day. He looked minutely into the character of Mr. Charles Richardson; he weighed his ostensible object; he imagined a variety of motives by which he might have been actuated, although they all touched upon the object which he himself had in view. But that upon which he more particularly dwelt was Lydia's cautious intimation that he might take the book with him, that she would be secret, that she would not

say a word; and as this, in his judgment, denoted a "foregone conclusion," he set to work to conceive what might have been done, and how what had been done might be discovered. This occupied his mind until the day began to dawn, when, having satisfied himself that he was able to detect the removal of any name from the register, no matter by what process the ink might have been discharged, he put his pillows up again and went to sleep, and slept profoundly until Fred aroused him.

"Fred, my boy," said he, having opened the door, "I am now more sanguine than ever of success."

"I am glad to hear it, Mr. Julian; but I fear that it is perfectly hopeless, now."

"I'll not give it up, Fred, yet. That fellow must have had some other design; of that I feel satisfied, and if he has been playing any trick with the register, and I strongly suspect that he has, it strikes me that I shall be able to detect it."

"But what has led to this suspicion?"

George explained; and, while dressing, entered fully into the subjects with which his mind had been occupied during the night; and as Fred felt convinced that the marriage in question *had* been recorded, it appeared quite plain to him then that the record in reality had, by the process suggested by George, been removed.

"But then," said he, "if even this should be ascertained, how can our object be thereby promoted? The very fact of the name of Broadbridge having been obliterated—the very detection—must be death to our hopes."

"Not so, Fred," returned George. "Hope still. My feelings on the subject will in that case be far more sanguine than those of mere hope: they will amount almost to those of absolute certainty."

"Doubtless," rejoined Fred. "The matter will in that event be certain enough."

"Nay, but I allude to the certainty of success."

"What if the name be entirely removed?"

"If in effecting its removal recourse has been had to any but one particular process, which I believe is known only to myself, the ink by which the space may have been filled up cannot stand the action of the atmosphere: it *must* go and soon."

"And if it should; if it should all fade away, and leave the space again blank, of what possible advantage can it be? in what way can it aid us? It is true we shall be satisfied of its having been done, but that will be but poor satisfaction in the absence of all proof of the name of Broadbridge having originally filled that space, and therefore if even this ink *should* fade—"

"Why, Fred, if it should, and the name of Broadbridge should have been originally there, the original writing can be sufficiently restored to enable us to establish your claim."

"Is it possible?"

"Quite Therefore hope still, Fred! We shall manage it yet."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DISCOVERY.

IMPRESSED with the conviction that some trick had been played with the register, they resolved to lose no time in bringing it to the test; and therefore, after having had a hasty breakfast, they started towards the village in the full persuasion that all the assistance the good old curate could render, they might command. George hoped that poor Lydia might be in the way, for he was anxious to hear more on the subject of her consent to the removal of the book, which it was evident had been previously, at least solicited; but as on their arrival at the cottage, he found her absent, he at once commenced a close examination, feeling convinced that whether the name had been erased, or the ink discharged, he should be able to detect it.

To this he devoted himself zealously for nearly two hours without the slightest prospect of success, while Fred and the curate were engaged in conversation at the window; but he continued still to prosecute his search; and, as on looking over the index for about the twentieth time, he perceived the name of Bristowe written with rather pale ink, he instantly turned to the page indicated, and saw there sufficient to convince him that the paper had been tampered with in some way.

"I have found it!" he exclaimed, on making this discovery; and the exclamation had so powerful an effect upon Fred, that for the moment it appeared to stop the action of his heart. "Do you perceive?—do you perceive that pale ink?" he added, pointing to the name.

"But that is Bristowe, not Broadbridge!" cried Fred.

"I know it! but look at the ink and then look at the surface of the paper. I'll stake my life that the name which originally occupied that spot, has been removed. The name of Bristowe has been recently written. And then look at the index! The same hand, the same ink, the same gloss upon the paper. Look thus at it: do you not perceive?"

It was at first sight scarcely perceptible, but after a time they both saw it distinctly, and were amazed.

"But," exclaimed the curate, who began to feel very much alarmed, "how could it have been done? Who could possibly have done it? The book has never for one moment been out of my possession."

"Not to your knowledge," replied George. "But be assured that the book *has* been out of your possession, and that too for several hours. It has been done with the utmost care. It could not have been hastily accomplished to such perfection."

"But how could it have been done without my knowledge? Who will believe in the possibility of its having been done without my knowledge, when I have always locked it up myself, and carried the key in my pocket."

George smiled, and said, "Sir, I believe you to be a most virtuous

man; I have reason to believe that you would religiously adhere to that which you felt to be the truth. In my view, your character is irreproachable, and therefore you must not imagine for a moment that I can entertain the thought of your having had the slightest cognizance of that which I feel well convinced has been done; but that this book, has been out of your possession—that it has been by some one clandestinely obtained—I will prove to you beyond all doubt, if you will but allow it to remain open for a few days thus, that the atmosphere may gradually act upon the writing in both the index and the entry itself. Will you allow this to be done?"

"Most certainly!—oh, most certainly!"

"By doing so, sir, you will not only be instrumental in bringing a most villanous transaction to light, but you will be conferring an obligation upon my friend, who will neither forget the service rendered nor be ungrateful."

"But I feel myself bound, sir, peculiarly bound to do all in my power to promote this object. Independently of which, sir, my own reputation is at stake!"

"Do not be at all apprehensive on that score."

"But the book, sir, has been in my custody; and if it should be found that this monstrous piece of wickedness has been accomplished, blame, sir, must attach to me—great blame."

"I am inclined to take a different view of the matter We attach no blame to the man that is robbed; if due caution has been used, we blame only the robber. You have taken all the care you could take of this record — that I think is abundantly clear, and therefore blame cannot attach to you if, in spite of that care, you have been deprived for a time of possession."

"I don't see—I'm sure I don't see how they possibly could have got hold of it."

"We shall be able, sir, to find even that out anon. I'll venture to say, that we shall not be long in ignorance of the mode in which the whole thing was managed."

"I hope that we may not, sir, sincerely. But how am I to act?"

"It will be necessary only to allow the book to remain open. It will be as well, however, to let no one have access to it except in your presence."

"No one shall touch it. I will not suffer any one even to approach it. I'll lock it up in this little parlour securely, and having done so, I'll lock up the key."

"We will do ourselves the pleasure of visiting you again in the course of a week; but if, in a day or two, you should find that the ink has faded materially, you will, perhaps, do me the favour to drop me a line."

The reverend gentleman assured them that he would do so; he then assured them, again and again, that he would not permit a soul to have access to the book, under any pretence whatever, until he saw them again; and, after many reciprocal expressions of kind feeling, George and Fred left the cottage, and returned by the first coach to town.

During his absence innumerable inquiries had been made after George; for as the fact of his having abandoned the Poyais speculation had become through Bull pretty generally known upon 'Change, they who held bonds were naturally anxious to learn, not only the cause of his leaving Mac Gregor, but his opinion on the subject of that magnificent person's real views. The silence, however, which George had consented to observe, he still resolved to maintain, while Bull himself—although he was sufficiently mysterious to inspire the timid with alarm—deemed it prudent to withhold all direct explanation.

"But what do you think, my dear boy?" said he on George's return. "What do you think? Would you believe it?—eh?—*would* you believe that he has started another loan?"

"I'm not surprised to hear it."

"But the amount—it'll stagger you, it will!—Eight hundred thousand pounds!"

"*Eight* hundred thousand?"

"Fact, as true as you are standing there alive! Did you ever hear of such a fellow? *I* never did."

"And does it take?"

"Take!—it can't fail to take! He does the thing in such style! The bonds are going off like wildfire, they are. It's amazing! I never saw anything like it in all my born days."

"I am sorry to hear it," said George. "But the thing will very soon be put a stop to now: if I mistake not the very first accounts from Poyais will bring the whole affair to an end."

"But what money we might have made, my dear boy, if we had but gone on with it!—eh?—what money we might have made!"

"We may consider ourselves fortunate that we got out of it so well as we did."

"No doubt; but what terms we might have brought him to! What terms we might have stipulated for! I really think that we ought to have insisted upon somewhat better terms. You see we made nothing by it: comparatively nothing."

"Very true; but how much might we have lost? Nay, how much *must* we have lost had we remained in utter ignorance of his real design?"

"Aye, but what with a knowledge of that design might we have gained?"

"The world's scorn. That at least we should have gained, and most deservedly too."

"The world's scorn!" echoed Bull, rather sarcastically, for the idea seemed to please him. "Why, my good fellow, any one would take you for a Methodist parson! What's the world's scorn to a man who has made his fortune? What need he care for the scorn of the world? Why he may snap his fingers at it in triumph, he may. What's it to him? But he never by any chance has it! The world scorns poverty, not wealth: nor does it ever scorn those who possess it. Look at the wealthy man!—see how universally he is respected. The world loves him—adores him!—His friends are his slaves!—they worship him!"

"They worship his wealth."

"They worship *him!*"

"For his wealth. Would they worship him were he not wealthy?

"Certainly not, and that shows what the power of wealth is! What is it to the world where the money comes from, or how it was obtained? The possession is what people look at! He who has it is sure to be looked up to and respected."

"There is," rejoined George, "much sophistry in that. A line must be drawn between a man and his means. The man who by the practice of dishonour becomes rich, is not respected by the world as a man. He appears to be respected by those whom he either serves or can serve—as a royal duke may appear to be beloved by those trades men who illuminate their houses on his birth-day: but as in that case no tradesman ever dreams of illuminating who neither gains nor expects to gain anything by it; so in this, none ever dream of paying homage to a rogue, save those who thereby either derive, or hope to derive, some advantage. It is the wealth and not the man: that distinction should be ever borne in mind."

"But so long as he is respected, of what importance can it be to the man himself, whether he be really respected as a man, or respected only because be is wealthy?"

"To the man himself it is of the highest conceivable importance. He who knows that he is respected only because he is wealthy, is indeed most wretched. He is tortured by that knowledge. He cannot be happy: happiness must ever be a stranger to his heart. Look at such a man—without stopping to study his character, look but in his face—and you will perceive no signs of a tranquil spirit there: know him better, and you will find his temper permanently soured. He looks upon all with an eye of suspicion. His life is embittered by the recollection of the means by which he rose, and while he is brim-full of vanity, having a feverish anxiety to obtain the good opinion of those with whom he is connected, he has nothing whatever to be proud of but his purse, the very germ of all his misery."

"Yes, that may be all very well," returned Bull; "but in this world wealth is a very great blessing."

"It is, if honourably acquired; but if obtained by the sacrifice of honour it is found to be, instead of a blessing, a curse. It is hence of the highest importance that a man should know that he is respected as a man; if he be not, or if he should feel that he is not—which has an equally powerful effect upon him—he cannot fail to be wretched, and the consciousness disturbs him most when he most needs repose. A man cannot contemn the opinion of the world having reference to himself. He may affect indifference; he may pretend to despise it, but it is but affectation; it is but pretence; if that opinion be adverse—and more especially if he be conscious of its being deservedly so, it must afflict him. None are really more sensitive than the really dishonourable. Let them conceal it as they may, they are wounded by the slightest hint, and that too the more deeply the more elevated in the scale of society they become; dishonour being a moral ulcer which

neither wealth nor station can heal, while the softest touch upon the tender place will cause the most exquisite pain."

"Then the minds of many of our most wealthy merchants," returned Bull, "cannot in that case be very much at ease; for the means by which they rose have been rather equivocal, they have."

"Depend upon it, their minds are disturbed in proportion as those means have been unjust. It is a gross and most pernicious mistake to suppose that a rich rogue is respected for aught but his riches. Now, we should have been rogues—probably, rich ones—had we gone on with this vile scheme, but then the wrongs inflicted upon the poor wretched emigrants would have haunted us till death."

"It is, perhaps, as well as it is."

"Much better. That 'honesty is the best policy' may not always appear, but the truth of the maxim is indisputable."

The conversation here dropped, but Bull felt, and strongly too, that they ought to have made better terms with Mac Gregor.

CHAPTER XVII.

GEORGE CONFUSES THE FACULTIES OF THREE INDIVIDUALS AT ONCE.

For the first three days after George's departure from the cottage, the curate's alarm was in some measure counteracted by the hope that the operation of the atmosphere upon the writing would effect no material change; but on the fourth day that hope completely vanished. The ink became so pale, and he was so apprehensive of its being supposed that he had tampered with it himself, that he at once called in Mr. Whomp the churchwarden, and Mr. Swiggles the parish clerk, that they also might witness the change, and bear testimony to its gradual progress.

These gentlemen were decidedly two of the most important individuals in the village; for, independently of being the churchwarden, Mr. Whomp was a miller, who enjoyed the reputation of having made a mint of money; while Swiggles, besides being clerk of the parish, was a constable, a schoolmaster, an accountant, and a statesman of no ordinary eloquence and depth.

On these two individuals being summoned, the curate with an air of the most intense mystery explained to them not only all he knew, but all he had heard, all he had dreamt of, and all he could suspect, and having brought this mysterious explanation to an end, he solemnly called upon them both to watch with him, which they both very readily consented to do.

Swiggles, however, at the same time, wished it to be distinctly understood, that he was perfectly prepared to contend for its being completely and unequivocally impossible for writing to be removed from any

document whatever, except by the legitimate and time-honoured process of scratching it out with a penknife.

"It isn't in nature," he added; "because the nature of ink is to sink, while the nature of paper is to suck; and therefore, when the ink has sunk into the paper, and the paper has sucked up the ink, it isn't to be removed if it isn't scratched out, and if it is scratched out, I can see it in an instant, because the paper in that individual spot must be of necessity thinner—don't you see?"

"I hope you are correct," replied the curate, "with all my heart; but I am informed that there are means of discharging the ink without having recourse to the knife."

"Impossible, sir—altogether impossible! How can it be done?"

"By some chemical process, I am told."

"It cannot be, sir—it cannot by any means be. I must have heard of it if it could. I couldn't have been teaching all these years without hearing of that—don't you see?"

"Well," replied the curate, "I cannot argue the point: time will show. These gentlemen have promised to convince me, when they come down again, that it is to be done, and till then I can only repeat what I have been told."

"I should like to see them do it," rejoined Swiggles, incredulously; "I should only just like to see them do it—that's all."

During this colloquy Whomp was quite silent; he scratched his ear with violence, as he invariably did whenever anything happened to amaze him, but he uttered no word; he assented to everything advanced by a nod, and thus performed what he conceived to be his duty.

The book was now constantly watched, and as the ink grew paler and paler still, it was considered expedient at the end of the fifth day to let George know what change had taken place. The curate accordingly wrote to the effect that the name of Bristowe was scarcely perceptible, which so delighted George that he and Fred started off by the first coach.

On their return to the cottage, they found the curate and his friend the churchwarden listening with great attention to Mr. Swiggles, who had come prepared to prove to demonstration, that as paper absorbed ink, ink could not be removed without the removal of that portion of the paper which had accomplished the act of absorption; but the moment George entered, Mr. Swiggles became mute, and simply bowed as the curate introduced him.

The book was then examined, and George expressed himself satisfied with the alteration that had taken place, and when the curate explained to him the progress of the change with the view of inspiring him with wonder, he merely observed that it was precisely what he expected.

"But when I first had the pleasure of seeing you," said the curate, "you were saying that ink could with ease be removed without the removal of any portion of the paper. This gentleman," he added, pointing to Mr. Swiggles, "is somewhat incredulous upon that point."

"I am," said Mr. Swiggles. "I've been a schoolmaster, sir, for nigh

four-and-thirty years, and I never in the whole course of my experience heard of ink being removed by any other process than that of scratching out."

"That is very probable," returned George, smiling. "I believe your assertion to be perfectly correct."

"Of course it is!" exclaimed Mr. Swiggles, addressing the curate with an air of triumph. "Of course! Didn't I say so?"

"But," continued George, "although you may not have heard of ink being removed by any other process, it does not, I apprehend, follow that the thing is impracticable!"

"But, sir, I'll venture to say that I am prepared to contend for its impracticability and—"

"Pardon me," said George, interrupting the little man. "I may contend that a windmill is bread; but I submit that I shall not thus establish my position: I promised, sir," he added, addressing the curate, "to prove to you that that which I suspect has been done in this case *can* be done with the utmost ease: I have come quite prepared to perform that promise, and I have no doubt whatever of being able at the same time to convince this gentleman that there are more things in the world than even *he* ever heard of. Will you favour me with any kind of document, an account-book, or any thing of that sort?"

"Will a letter do?" inquired Mr. Swiggles.

"O yes! a letter will do equally well."

Mr. Swiggles produced a letter of rather an ancient date, the ink upon which was extremely black, and appeared to have been ingeniously established with the wrong end of a pen.

"You are determined," said George, "that the test shall be effectual?"

Swiggles made no reply, but winked with great significance both at the curate and at Whomp, the churchwarden, for he potently believed, not only that George had undertaken to do that which was impossible, but that—even assuming it to be possible with very pale ink—with a letter like that, the ink being so intense, and so well daubed on, he must fail.

George, however, requested the curate to order some boiling water and a dish, and when these were produced, he placed the letter upon the dish, and having strewed a certain white powder over it, applied the boiling water, when, in an instant, as if by magic, the ink turned red!

Mr Swiggles looked at him, and then at the letter, and then at his friends, with an aspect of utter amazement; and while the curate seemed to be absolutely frightened, the churchwarden grinned and rubbed up his ear with all the energy at his command.

"I'm astonished!" cried the curate.

"What will this world come to?" exclaimed the churchwarden. "It's enough to raise the dead from the grave!"

Mr. Swiggles said nothing. His mouth, hands, and eyes, were wide open, and he really appeared to be breathless.

"Watch it," cried George; and the colour changed to a pink. "Continue to watch it," he added; and the ink became gradually paler and

paler, until at length it was perfectly imperceptible. There was nothing before them but a sheet of white paper: no line, no trace of any writing could be seen: it was, in short, a perfect blank.

"Wonderful!" cried the astonished curate.

"Oh, the world knows too much!" said the churchwarden, gravely—"the world knows too much."

"I couldn't have believed it!" exclaimed Mr. Swiggles. "I *wouldn't* have believed it, if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes!"

George removed the sheet of paper from the dish, and having washed it in clear cold water, hung it upon the back of a chair.

"Now," said he, "gentlemen, having shown you that ink can be erased without having recourse to a penknife, I will presently show you that it is to be restored."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Swiggles, "do you mean to say it's possible to bring the writing back?"

"It shall presently appear upon that sheet of paper as it was before, precisely, blots and all."

"It's enough, sir," observed the churchwarden, "to make the wild beasts leave their dens."

"But while the paper is drying," resumed George, "I'll explain how I conceive the name of Bristowe was substituted for that of Broadbridge in the register. In the first place, the book was by some means or other taken away."

"That's the mystery," cried the curate. "How could they have got at it?—how could it have been done, when it has always been locked up carefully, while the key of the box has never been out of my possession?"

"It could not have been done here," continued George; "nor could it have been done at the church; it must have taken some considerable time to accomplish, for after the ink had been discharged, as you have seen, the paper must have been gradually dried, and not only dried, but prepared to receive the fresh ink; for were I now to attempt to write upon that sheet of paper in its present state, the ink would run completely over it. The process which you witnessed, the gradual drying and subsequent preparation of the paper, must therefore have occupied several hours; and that the thing was effected in the way I described, I think there can now be no doubt."

"Then it must have been taken away," cried the curate. "But how?—how could they have got it?—and what will be the consequence? To me it may be dreadful."

"I think you need be under no apprehension," said George. "The matter shall be settled privately, if possible With your assistance, I hope we shall be able to manage that."

The expression of this hope caused the curate to feel somewhat relieved He was, however, still apprehensive that a strictly private settlement would be impossible, and entered into a long explanation of what a very shocking thing it would be, if his name were to be brought before the public, in connexion with an act so desperately wicked.

To this explanation, notwithstanding its manifest importance, Mr.

Swiggles paid but very slight attention indeed. His whole soul seemed absorbed in the contemplation of the blank sheet of paper before him,—while his impatience to see the writing restored, the possibility of which he still scarcely believed, was truly painful.

George did not, however, keep him long in suspense: the paper was soon sufficiently dry for the purpose, and when it became so, he placed it upon the table, and having produced a small phial, poured the solution it contained over those parts of the paper upon which the writing had appeared. Having done this, he observed that nothing more was required, and left the table, while the curate, the churchwarden, Fred and Swiggles, were watching with almost breathless anxiety, for the reappearance of the ink. For the first two minutes no signs of the restoration of the writing were perceptible, and Mr. Swiggles, in consequence, began to prepare a severe sentence, the object of which was to convey an idea to all present, of how well he knew that the thing could not be done; but just as he was about to deliver that sentence, a letter apparently sprang up to check him, and then a word, and then a line, and then several lines together; and thus the process worked until the entire letter reappeared, the writing being as perfect, and the ink, as black as before.

"Well! that bangs nature!" exclaimed the churchwarden. "It's wonderful the world goes on at all. It's enough to make the clouds fall down from the heavens, and smother us alive."

"You are not," observed George to Mr. Swiggles, "indisposed to believe that the thing can be done now, I apprehend?"

"It beats all I ever heard tell of," replied Mr. Swiggles. "It's wizard's work!—sleight-of-hand!—magic! I couldn't have supposed it to be possible!"

Nor could the curate; and as for the churchwarden!—the whole of his faculties seemed to be gone!—he turned up his eyes, and dropped his hands, as if he felt that he had lived long enough. His amazement was inexpressible; at least he neither knew, nor had heard of the words which could express it; he obviously imagined that after that there was nothing more to know, and that, therefore, the world was in a perfectly fit state to be brought to an end.

Having entered into a few explanations tending to illustrate that which they had seen, George earnestly endeavoured to impress upon their minds the necessity for using the utmost caution: he stated, that in order to obtain more information on the subject, it would be necessary to give indirect publicity to the affair, and that although neither names nor places would be mentioned, the probability was, that as soon as the discovery became known to those concerned in this nefarious transaction, an attempt would be made to destroy or to mutilate the register; and having obtained from them a promise that under no pretence whatever should access to the book be had save in the presence of them all, he and Fred returned to town, and the next day the following advertisement appeared in the whole of the London papers:—

"Five Hundred Pounds Reward!—Whereas a discovery of a singular nature has been recently made in the register of a certain

parish in the county of Sussex: And whereas it is strongly suspected that an entry of the marriage of the grandfather of a person claiming to be heir-at-law of a gentleman who some time since died intestate, has been extracted by some chemical process, and the marriage of a feigned party entered instead; the above reward will be given to any person or persons who will establish such facts that it may be given in evidence, in a suit at present pending, for the recovery of the property involved. The strictest secrecy may be relied on, and all personal information will be considered confidential; apply by letter, or otherwise, at the office of Mr. G. St. George Julian, Old Broad Street, City."

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN WHICH A POINT OF SOME DELICACY IS STARTED.

It is beyond doubt a remarkable fact, that in all matters touching the heart, the perceptive faculties of the ladies are extremely acute. They can see pretty clearly at a glance if there be anything morally the matter with a man, but with singular distinctness are they able to perceive when he happens to be in love.

Those, therefore, who know this quality to be one of the most distinguishing characteristics of the sex, will not consider it extraordinary that Julia and Helen should perceive that Fred had been caught, notwithstanding he acted upon the suggestion of George, and did all in his power to conceal it.

His comparative silence and peculiar diffidence while in the presence of Helen, had proclaimed the true state of the case from the first; but after the discovery detailed in the preceding chapter had been made, and he in consequence believed that he should soon be in a position to propose without the prospect of being rejected upon pecuniary grounds, it became, although almost unconsciously on his part, so palpable, that Helen—who had never even hinted at the possibility of his being enamoured of her—not only withheld all encouragement, but assumed a marked coldness of manner towards him, which tended not alone to afflict *him*, but to give pain to Julia, with whom he was a favourite, and who had heard of his warm declaration to George.

It were superfluous, probably, to dwell upon the proneness of men to impart secrets to their wives, and equally superfluous would it be to describe at any considerable length the apparent impossibility of wives' keeping the secrets thus imparted: it will, therefore, perhaps, be sufficient to state here, that the possession of this secret, as a secret, was to Julia so great an annoyance, that she was constantly prompted to communicate it to Helen, which was really very natural, for although hypochondriacs and all such miserable people contend that we are naturally selfish—and as they invariably set themselves up as the standard of

perfection, this can excite no surprise—even they will admit that as far as secrets are concerned, we are not disposed to be selfish at all. Julia, however, would have kept this particular secret, doubtless, had she believed it to be necessary for her to do so; certainly she would not have divulged it had she felt that any living creature would be thereby injured; but as she did not hold concealment to be necessary, but on the contrary, conceived that the happiness of both Helen and Fred would be enhanced by the fact of its being made known, she embraced the very earliest opportunity that offered of bringing the matter to bear.

"Helen," she observed, "has Mr. Broadbridge offended you in any way, my love?"

"O dear me, no," replied Helen, "not at all!"

"I am glad to hear it," rejoined Julia; "I feared that he had perhaps unconsciously given you some offence."

"None whatever. On the contrary, he is but too attentive."

"*Too* attentive?" echoed Julia.

"I do not," said Helen, who felt somewhat confused, "I do not mean too attentive in any offensive sense; but merely that his attentions are too marked to allow me to feel offended."

"Then why do you treat him so coolly, my love?"

"*Do* I treat him coolly?"

"Why, I may be mistaken, but it certainly appears to me that you do. Tell me, is it in consequence of his being so attentive?—Come, dear," she added, as she perceived that Helen blushed, "there surely is no necessity for concealing anything from me?"

"My dear Julia," said Helen, "I admit that, although I highly respect Mr. Broadbridge, and believe him to be an honourable and amiable person, I have of late assumed a coldness of manner towards him for the very reason you have assigned. It may be ascribed to vanity on my part,—nay, it may even appear to be ridiculous, but I have perceived, or fancied that I perceived, indications of the existence of those feelings, the growth of which it becomes me to check. It is, perhaps, very silly of me, Julia, to think so, but I have thought, and do think still, that he has an object in view which I feel myself bound to discourage."

"His object I *know*," returned Julia, "but I really cannot see in what way you are bound to discourage it."

"You *know* his object?"

"I do: it is to prevail upon you to become Mrs. Broadbridge at no very remote period."

"Impossible! But how came you to *know* this?"

"It is a secret; a very great secret. However, I do not mind telling you, dear, but you must not disclose it for the world."

"I will not."

"Well then, some time since, he and Mr. Julian had a long conversation about you. I was not at the time present, but I heard all about it the very same night. Mr. Broadbridge of course commenced it. He was particularly anxious to ascertain how long we had known you, whether you were engaged, and so on and I believe that George entered into a brief explanation of that unfortunate affair—for men, you know,

my love, are in one respect not unlike us, they *will* talk when they get together. Well, dear, this explanation, brief as it was, rendered you in his view an object of still greater interest than before; he lamented his poverty as if that alone forbade him to hope, and eventually promised, at the suggestion of George, that he would not urge his suit. But now that there is every prospect of his being extremely rich—for George tells me that he is almost sure of being able to establish his claim to this property—you must expect that he will very soon declare himself, Helen; for that he loves you, no doubt can exist."

"I am very sorry for it," said Helen.

"Sorry, dear! Why should you be sorry? Do you not like Mr. Broadbridge?"

"I do, very much: I may say that I admire him, for I do indeed admire his general character, while his manners and conversation delight me. Still am I sorry that he should have proposed to himself an object the attainment of which is so hopeless."

"But why hopeless? He loves you, and you admit that you at least admire him. Has any one recently stolen your heart, dear?"

"No, Julia; no, my love," replied Helen, mournfully; "no, it is not that."

"What on earth then can it be? Have you any doubt about his being successful in his effort to establish his claim to this property?"

"None. I believe that he will be successful; but his success would not influence me; it would not shake my resolution. Whereas, I will confess to you, that were he to fail and I were differently circumstanced, I would not reject him."

"Why, surely, you do not allude to that unfortunate marriage?"

"It is, indeed, Julia, that to which I do allude."

"But how can that operate against your contracting another marriage, when legally that was no marriage at all?"

"It is true I am not legally bound by that marriage, but I feel that I am bound morally notwithstanding."

"Then do you mean to say, that you would not be justified in marrying again?"

"I should not feel justified in doing so, unless, indeed, *that* were to occur of which I must not even dream."

"Oh, but,—dear me,—why, that's a very incorrect view to take of the matter."

"It may be incorrect, but it is my view still."

"Then you really do, in consequence of your having been led into an illegal marriage, feel yourself bound to remain single all your life?"

"Dear Julia, pray do not dwell upon the subject; you would not willingly give me pain; you possess too kind—too good a heart to wound the feelings of any one, I know; but, indeed, dear, this is to me a painful subject, and therefore I feel that you will not pursue it."

"I would not for the world, dear Helen," returned Julia, "were I not well convinced of its being essential to your happiness. It *is* a painful subject, I am aware, and if I loved you less I should be in proportion as disposed to renew it; but what if it were to lead you to your

being really united to one who adores you—one who would cherish and love you for ever?"

"It cannot lead to that. No, Julia; when at the altar with him in whose honour I had too hastily taught my heart to confide, I did not view the ceremony as being merely legal, nor when it was ended did I feel myself bound by the law alone. The contract into which *I* entered was of a more awful character than that, and, although he has not performed *his* part of that contract—although he had really no right to perform it—I should feel no more justified in marrying again while he lives than you would feel justified in sacrificing your honour on discovering your husband's infidelity."

"But, my dear, these cases are not at all analogous."

"Morally, they are—legally, they may not be; but as I considered mine to be not merely a legal marriage, I cannot think that the fact of its being proved to be illegal relieves me from the solemn obligation of my vow. I did not even think about the law: I regarded it as a religious contract strictly."

"And I am bound to respect your religious scruples; but, really, Helen, this appears to me to be a very cruel doctrine. I do not believe that you would find many disciples. I am sure that *I* could never agree with you, my love. The idea of your being bound to pass a life of unhappiness because you happen to have been inveigled into an illegal marriage, seems to me to be monstrous."

"But it does not follow that I must of necessity be unhappy because I feel bound to remain single. For example, I am happy in your society ever."

"But what is that?" rejoined Julia—"what is the society of any woman, compared with that of an affectionate husband? O Helen! you *must* change your views on this subject"

"I cannot: I feel that I never shall! But pray say no more, there's a *dear!*"

"Then you must promise me faithfully that you will reflect upon the matter?"

"I will; I'll promise you anything, my love, if you spare me upon this one point."

The compact was sealed: they kissed each other fondly. Helen still felt her resolution to be firm, but Julia believed that reflection would shake it.

CHAPTER XIX.

INTRODUCES A SUBJECT OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE.

NOTWITHSTANDING a fortnight had elapsed since the appearance of the first advertisement having reference to the register, no answer had been received. Still George continued to advertize daily: he believed that it would eventually be answered, and although he was prepared to

pursue a public course if it were not, he was determined to effect a private settlement if possible, knowing the difficulties he should otherwise have to surmount.

At this period of our history, a person named Waghorn—whose father, with whom the son was in partnership, had been intimate with Bull for many years—expressed a wish to be introduced to George, having heard Bull frequently speak in high terms of his talent and general character.

A day for the introduction was accordingly fixed: they were to dine at Bull's cottage; but in order that the character of Waghorn may at once be understood, it will be correct to introduce him in the first place to the public.

The firm of Waghorn and Co. had existed as carpet-manufacturers for nearly half a century, and a highly respectable firm it was; enjoying in fact such extensive credit, and doing so large and so profitable a business that it was for many years a common observation in the trade, that the Waghorns could have fifty thousand pounds by merely holding out their hands.

At this time the firm consisted of father and son, William and John Hill Waghorn; but the father, being very infirm, left the management of the business entirely to the son, who, although not extravagant in his personal habits, was constantly entering into wild speculations, which plunged him into difficulties that would have appeared to almost any other man insurmountable. He struggled, however, with them most manfully, and by consummate tact kept from his father all knowledge, not only of the schemes into which he had entered, but of the losses he had thereby sustained; but as in order to accomplish this he had been compelled to raise an artificial capital, which he could then sustain only at a ruinous sacrifice, he conceived the idea of opening a number of shops in the carpet trade, supplying them with stock, and placing in them persons who might appear as principals, although in reality but his servants, and who might accept whatever bills he chose to draw on them, a perfect understanding being established between them, *sub rosâ*, that he should regularly provide for such bills at maturity.

Having conceived this scheme and duly considered it in all its ramifications, he took a house in Fore-street, another in Wood-street, a third in Cheapside, a fourth in Bishopsgate-street, a fifth in Holborn, a sixth in Long-acre, a seventh in Blackfriars-road, and an eighth in the Strand, selecting them in good situations in order that by letting the upper parts of the houses he might have the shops nearly rent-free, a calculation which in every instance proved to be correct; and having fitted them up, he engaged proper persons to manage the concerns, and supplied them with goods, which he entered in his own books as *bonâ fide* sales, taking care of course to secure himself against every species of dishonesty.

Bold as this project may, under the circumstances, appear, the result proved successful. Each of the establishments yielded a considerable profit, and while he had a legitimate sale for the immensely increased

stock of goods which he purchased, he had that which was still more valuable to him then—the *ad libitum* accommodation of eight flourishing establishments, free of expense.

He had peculiar facilities for taking advantage of this new position; his connexions in the country were extensive, and through them he could get large quantities of bills discounted freely by the country bankers, and although, as an inducement, he gave those connexions the accommodation of one half of the money so raised, by drawing upon them at three months for that half, he could get their bills discounted easily in London, and thus realise in cash the whole of his country remittances.

This tended, moreover, to increase his trade in the provinces considerably, and as several of the houses he had established in London—and which have existed as highly respectable concerns even up to the present day—became so prosperous, that the friends of the young men whom he had appointed to manage them, paid him large sums for the stock and goodwill, his difficulties began to disappear, and the credit of the firm was being in consequence gradually re-established at the time of his introduction to George.

Bull was delighted with the opportunity of bringing them together; and was rather surprised that he had not done so before, more especially as they appeared to be highly pleased with each other when they met, and seemed to him to view the meeting but as a preliminary to some new speculation.

As far as George was concerned, however, this was not correct: he met Waghorn—whom he found to be a remarkably shrewd and intelligent man—with the view of passing an agreeable evening in his society, without any ulterior object whatever.

Of course they conversed upon nothing but business. Commercial matters only have power to charm essentially money-making men. It is true that George was not so exclusively wrapped up in commerce as to take delight in no other subject; but Bull and Waghorn were, and hence, as a matter of courtesy to them, he touched upon subjects of business alone.

At first, the bubbles of the day were the chief topic upon which they dwelt; but as this led them through the exchanges to the subject of banking, they entered into an analysis of the then existing system, it being one with which Waghorn was anxious to be more conversant than he was.

"I am frequently astonished," he observed, when George—with whom it was a favourite topic—had explained the leading features of this system—"I am frequently astonished to see country banks, which are started by private individuals, of whom the majority are perfectly unknown, succeed to so great an extent."

"Why, it is *primâ facie* amazing," returned George. "But when we look below the surface, and moreover take into consideration that they do but follow the example of those who started the bank of England, and who were equally private individuals, originally constituting a strictly private company, our amazement must cease."

"Was it, then, a strictly private company?" inquired Bull.

"Most certainly. When it was first recognised by parliament, on its being found expedient to anticipate the resources of the country, and to impose taxes for the payment of the interest, it was recognised only as a private company, or, as Bishop Burnet says in the History of his own Times—certain merchants whom parliament empowered to deal in bullion, and so on."

"They have worked up amazingly, then," observed Bull. "They must have been very clever fellows, they must, to have conducted the thing on so large a scale without embarrassments."

"They *were* clever fellows, and their successors have been equally clever; but as far as embarrassments are concerned, they have not been free from them. In 1696, the bank became so involved that it suspended the payment of its notes, which were at a discount of twenty per cent., while exchequer bills were at a discount of fifty. At this time, there were no notes out under twenty pounds, nor were there any until 1793, when five-pound notes were issued. In 1745, too, the bank as nearly as possible stopped, and saved itself *only* by paying in sixpences and shillings, and had it not been for an order in council prohibiting the directors from paying their notes in specie, when they happened to have no specie, it must inevitably have gone in 1797. They have not, therefore, although they have worked up with consummate tact, been free from serious embarrassments. But the whole history of the bank is a monster-marvel viewed with reference to public credulity, and must be interesting, not to commercial men alone, but to the country in general, seeing that it embraces the history of that in which all are of course concerned, namely, the National Debt. I think, Mr. Bull," continued George, "that you have Blackstone here. His plain unvarnished tale is not only the most concise, but the most lucid description of the progress of the debt I have ever met with; it is one, too, which—although he is considered by them all as a constitutional oracle—upsets the sophistries of Pitt and his proselytes completely."

He then went to the bookcase, and having opened the first volume of the Commentaries, continued.

"'How these immense sums,' says Blackstone, alluding to the taxes, 'are appropriated, is next to be considered. And this is first and principally to the payment of the interest of the National Debt In order to 'take a clear and comprehensive view of the nature of this National Debt, 'it must first be premised that, after the Revolution, when our new connexions with Europe introduced a new system of foreign politics, the expenses of the nation, not only in settling the new establishment, 'but in maintaining long wars, as principals, on the continent, for the 'security of the Dutch barrier, reducing the French monarchy, settling 'the Spanish succession, supporting the House of Austria, maintaining 'the liberties of the Germanic body, &c., increased to an unusual degree, 'insomuch that it was not thought advisable to raise all the expenses of 'any one year by taxes to be levied within that year, lest the unaccustomed 'weight should create murmurs among the people. It was, therefore, the 'policy of the times to anticipate the revenues of their posterity by

'borrowing immense sums for the current services of the state, and to 'lay no more taxes upon the subject than would suffice to pay the an- 'nual interest of the sums so borrowed; by this means converting the 'principal debt into a new species of property transferable from one 'man to another—a system which seems to have had its original in 'the state of Florence, 1344, which government then owed about '60,000*l.* sterling, and being unable to pay it, formed the principal 'into an aggregate sum, called metaphorically a mount or bank, the 'shares whereof were transferable like our stock, with interest at 5 'per cent., the prices varying according to the exigences of the state. 'This policy of the English parliament laid the foundation of what is 'called the National Debt. And the example then set has been so 'closely followed during the long wars of Queen Anne and since, that 'the capital of the National Debt amounted in June, 1777, to about 'one hundred and thirty-six millions, and July, 1786, one hundred 'and thirty-nine millions; to pay the interest of which, together with 'certain annuities for lives and the charges of management, extra- 'ordinary revenues are in the first place mortgaged and made per- 'petual by parliament. Perpetual I say, but still redeemable by the 'same authority that imposed them, which, if it at any time can pay 'off the capital, will abolish those taxes which are raised to discharge 'the interest. By this means, the quantity of property in the king- 'dom, is greatly increased in idea compared with former times, yet if 'we coolly consider it, not at all increased in reality. We may boast 'of large fortunes and quantities of money in the funds. But where 'does this money exist? It exists only in name, in paper, in public 'faith, in parliamentary security, and that is undoubtedly sufficient 'for the creditors of the public to rely on. But, then, what is the 'pledge which the public faith has pawned for the security of these 'debts? The land, the trade, and the personal industry of the sub- 'ject, from which the money must arise that supplies the several taxes. 'In these therefore, and these only, the property of the public creditors 'does really and intrinsically exist; and of course the land, the trade, 'and the personal industry of individuals are diminished in their true 'value just so much as they are pledged to answer. If A's income 'amount to a hundred per annum, and he is so far indebted to B 'that he pays him fifty pounds per annum for this interest, one-half 'of the value of A's property is transferred to B, the creditor. The 'debtor is only a trustee for the creditor, for one-half of the value 'of his income. In short, the property of a creditor of the public 'consists in a certain portion of the national taxes; by how much, 'therefore, he is the richer, by so much the nation which pays 'these taxes is the poorer.' I am surprised," continued George, "that upon this subject Blackstone should never be quoted. This, how- ever, is a clear, although but a very brief view of the history of the debt—which is in reality the history of the Bank—and as the debt is the foundation of public credit, so is it the basis of banking—the banker borrowing of the mass of the community, and substituting promises to pay for that which he gets in exchange for

those promises. This has doubtless become a great public convenience, and as the Bank of England, by borrowing of the people to lend to the government, established this public convenience in London, there is no reason why it should not have been extended to the provinces, and when we look at the facilities for getting notes into circulation in the country—depending, as the circulation does, solely upon faith—it is surprising only that country banks are not more numerous, and especially when we consider how small a capital is absolutely required."

"Does it *not*, then, require much capital?" inquired Waghorn.

"I'll undertake to start a country bank with a capital of one hundred pounds, with every prospect of success: with a thousand, I'd make it a profitable concern; but a provincial bank, with a *bonâ fide* capital of two thousand pounds, might, if properly managed, carry all before it. In banking, prudence is essentially the germ of success: the system has existed in this country now for nearly two hundred years: it commenced in 1645. Francis Child established the first bank in Fleet-street, and Snow and Dean started the second in the Strand—both of which stand now on the very spots on which they commenced—and although thousands of failures have taken place since the introduction of that system into England, there have been few indeed not directly ascribable to either ignorance, improvidence, or dishonour."

At this moment, the conversation was interrupted by a knock at the door, of so extraordinary a character, that it sounded as if a young undertaker had arrived with a view of driving in a few nails for practice.

"Who can that be?" cried Bull, who felt somewhat alarmed; "I can't guess, I can't!—surely there's nothing the matter!"

His fears were soon hushed: the servant entered with the card of Mr. Augustus Alexander Cavendish.

"It's that fellow Cavendish," said Bull, addressing George, "shall we have him in?"

"Oh, by all means," replied George, and the next moment Cavendish was shown into the room.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, grasping the hand of his friend Bull, with great affection. "But I hadn't the idea of a notion of—Ah! Mr. Julian! proud to see you!—Friend of yours?" he added, waving his hand gracefully towards Waghorn. "Proud to know him. I thought I'd just drive over to-night, you see, Bull, as I want to do a little piece of business in the morning. I only came to secure you. I hadn't a thought of finding any one with you. I ought to make ten thousand apologies."

These were, however, declared to be unnecessary; the wine was pushed towards him, and he began to consider himself perfectly at home, when as Waghorn was anxious to have the subject on which they had been conversing resumed, Cavendish was put in possession of that subject, in order that he might, if he pleased, join them.

"You know something of banking, I believe?" observed George.

"It strikes me rather," returned Cavendish, "that I do. I flatter

myself that I know a *little* about it, and that little comprehends all. As the great proposition is now well received, that the impoverishment of the country promotes its prosperity, a bank is the best dodge going. There can't be a better if you have kindred spirits to work with; if you have not, why, there can't be a worse. There has been enough money made by that dodge alone to buy up the country again and again. Just take a few particulars from my little pocket-book here. I'll not go far back—I'll just take a little retrospective view of thirty years: in 1793, the actual number of country banks that stopped payment was exactly a hundred; between that year and 1810, eighty-seven commissions of bankruptcy were issued against country banks; in 1810, there were twenty-six more; and from 1810 to 1814, twenty-nine; in 1814 15-16 there were ninety-two; and from 1816 to the present Anno Domini 1833, there have been fifty. Here we have a total, in round numbers, of three hundred; and as the commissions have borne to the compositions a proportion of only one to four, we have an average total of twelve hundred banks suspended in England—to say nothing of Ireland—within thirty years! Now there's an advantage to the public! Of course they were all established with a view to public advantage! Of course!—and John Bull has paid for all. And a capital fellow is John—he bleeds like a pig. But, then, what does it matter to him? He's a highly respectable fellow, and any one will trust him. His credit is unlimited; hence he has got into debt, and debt is a test of respectability all over the world. A capital country this is for swindling. Anything will take. I think of starting a swindling dodge for the total suppression of swindling soon."

"But you don't mean to say," observed George, "that the whole of those banks which have failed within the last thirty years have been swindles?"

"No; not the whole: the majority, however, are known to have been; but as all these rag-shops that fail must have been managed by either swindlers or fools, it is a matter of little importance to the public: as far as they are concerned, the result is equally advantageous. Now I'll just explain how I'd proceed, if I were about to start a country bank myself. In the first place, having selected my town, I'd take a house in the most conspicuous position, and have it fitted up in style. I'd then engage a gang of venerable individuals, the whole of whom should sport spectacles, pigtails, and powder, some to remain in the bank to amuse themselves by turning over the leaves of the ledgers, and pretending to make entries with as much rapidity as if they hadn't many minutes to live, while the others were engaged in forcing the rags into circulation. The official fittings up, by the way, must be particularly attended to. A trap-door, with a rope above attached to a large iron safe, is indispensable, as a means of conveying to the human mind an idea of a fire-proof vault. There must also be a mob of tin boxes, for the deposit of deeds, mortgages, and other securities; blunderbusses, cutlasses, and pistols, to keep away the thieves; and a highly-polished counter, with inkstands, blotting-paper, sundry wooden bowls, containing, of course, half sand and half silver, and a few im-

mense bundles of paper, to represent somewhere about half a million of Bank of England notes. Your own rags, of course, can be soon got. My object would be to have a plate engraved, as nearly as possible like that of the largest and oldest bank in the town, that my notes might run among theirs without exciting any particular notice. Some must be payable in London, of course; but the bulk must be brought to the bank; and if you have but a few active and respectable-looking agents, a few thousands may be pushed into circulation in no time. At first, however, I should act with great caution. I'd make all the friends I could. I would not be a furious politician, but a Tory—a sort of moderate Tory, — and while going hand in hand with the nobility and clergy, I'd cultivate an acquaintance with coachmen, farmers, editors of newspapers, well-meaning tailors, and so on. I'd even buy a share of one of the papers, if I could, in order that the bank might be constantly puffed: but this of course must not be known; because, if anything should appear in that paper severe upon the scum, and they were aware of your being connected with it, they'd treat you to a run upon the bank as soon as look at you. Benevolent institutions form another great feature. I'd subscribe to every one in the town. Nothing has a greater effect than charity, if you manage to make it well known."

"But you'd require a large capital to do this, would you not?" inquired Waghorn.

"Capital!—bless your life, no; scarcely any to commence with. To do the thing in style, of course you must have a little, but even then you require very little indeed. Your rags give you a capital, which with tact you can always keep floating. I'd push mine out in all quarters. Some of them are sure to be a long time coming back, especially if you manage to inspire general confidence."

"That in fact is all that is required," observed George.

"Of course; and the ease with which it is to bed one now is surprising. The people in the provinces would rather have your notes than those of the Bank of England at any time; and now that they are hanging such mobs of poor devils for forgery, they'll scarcely look at a Bank of England note at all. How do they know that it's a good one? Whereas local notes in this view are sure to be good! which shows the extent of their faith. And then the accounts: I'd open one if I could with every tradesman in the town, however small, and they could easily be persuaded into that, for there is something so catching in the terms, 'my banker,' 'my account,' and 'my cheque,' that it is in most cases, if properly put, irresistible. I'd open accounts with them all. If they hadn't any cash I'd take their bills. I'd accommodate the little swells in any way!—and when I'd thus carried on the game for about two years, I'd make fifty thousand pounds by the smash."

"But if you were doing a good business, why stop at all?" said George.

"It's the only way," replied Mr. Cavendish, "to make a fortune quickly. It's very slow travelling if you go by the other coach. You may be all your life realising a fortune on the square."

"Then you'd start expressly with the view of stopping payment?"

"Of course! Why not? They nearly all do it. Look at the multitude of mushroom banks which have sprung up of late all over the country! Will any man tell me that one twentieth part of them were started on the square? They almost all start to stop when the state of their issues renders it expedient. And what can prevent them? They can always find plenty of excuses. They can stop when they please as a matter of course, and it is that which makes it so capital a dodge."

Having heard Mr. Cavendish to this extent, George proceeded to describe the course that *he* should pursue in the event of starting as a banker, and so clearly did he make it appear that with a capital of two thousand pounds a provincial bank might be established on a secure foundation, with every prospect of its being permanently profitable, that Waghorn—who had been extremely attentive throughout, and by whom the introduction of the subject was considered a most fortunate circumstance, viewed with reference to the commercial position in which he then stood—made an appointment with George before they separated for the night, at the same time intimating that his object was to tempt him to reduce his theory to practice.

CHAPTER XX.

THE IMMORTAL PETER'S ACCOUNT OF POYAIS.

On the following morning on his arrival at the office, George found a ship letter on the table, which he instantly opened, expecting, of course, that it came from the Mosquito-shore. It was dated Belize, Bay of Honduras, and duly signed by the immortal Peter. In appearance it was quite a curiosity; being crossed and recrossed in a diagonal direction, and so perfectly full that in neither of the corners was there sufficient space left to stick in another word. It ran as follows:—

"My dear Mr. Julian,

"A dreadful do, sir, a cruel do, is this Poyais expedition. Never, sir, was there such a heartrending swindle. It is infamous, iniquitous, monstrous, sir: I cannot find words, sir, sufficiently strong to designate a do so disreputable and dirty: and did I not think that you knew nothing of it, did I not believe that that devil's imp, Mac Gregor—I wish he was here, I *only* wish the women here had hold of him, because he'd be butchered by inches—did I not believe, I say, that that rapscallion—oh, blister him!—deceived you as well as those unfortunate fools who came out to that blessed Poyais, I'd never speak to you again; but as I cannot imagine that if you had known the true nature of this dismal swindle, you would have carried the joke so far as to victimize me, I

write to inform you what a pickle we are in, and to give you a brief description of this lovely land of promise.

"In six weeks, sir, after we sailed from the Downs, we arrived off the Mosquito shore. We had a very decent voyage, and my companions were very decent people of the sort, and we therefore passed the time very pleasantly, considering; but what were our feelings when, on arriving at Black River, we found those unhappy individuals, who came out previously in the Honduras packet, with starvation staring them full in the face. You know, sir, that the Kennersly Castle was short of provisions, reliance having been most unfortunately placed upon those which were sent in the Honduras packet. Our first question, therefore, on landing was 'How are you off for provisions?' And when we were told that the captain of the packet had set sail for Cape Gracias à Dios, with nearly the whole of them on board, we were reduced to a state bordering on madness. Some, seeing how dreadfully deluded they had been, sank into despair, while others, becoming desperate, attacked the neighbouring Indians, set fire to their wigwams, and then began to fight among themselves. Three of the most reckless stole the boat of the Kennersly Castle, and, accompanied by some Indians, made off for Belize; and when they were gone and the rest had become somewhat quiet, I began to look a little about me. But, O what a place!—what a wilderness! Oh! there was I groaning about with the rest—sometimes trying to hook up a fish—and sometimes assisting to build a sort of pigsty to live in, while the women, in order to facilitate matters, and to make the thing as pleasant as they could, were alternately blowing up their husbands for coming, and bitterly cursing the whole concern.

"My object at first, being a peaceable person, was to propitiate a few of the natives, who were highly respectable swells in their way, and in this I succeeded to a certain extent; but when I endeavoured with all the eloquence I had in me to inspire them with a high appreciation of the value of the Poyaisian bank-notes, with the view of prevailing upon them to oblige me with change, or at least to give something substantive in return, they wouldn't have them at any price at all! I told them I wouldn't mind paying for the accommodation; I, moreover, explained to them the high respectability of banks in general, and more especially that of the National Bank of Poyais; but no: they were too artful; they didn't, it is true, doubt my honour, but they wouldn't change the notes. And these notes were our only currency—all salaries were paid with these notes. The bank existed only in imagination, you are aware; had it been otherwise, the run upon it would have been tremendous.

"Fortunately, there was not a single person sent out who was ever suspected of being anything but a victim; if such a man *had* been sent with us, it is quite clear to me that the women would have made a victim of him, for they were desperate creatures,—there was no such thing as holding them at all,—they were fifty times worse than the men, who couldn't make head or tail of them.

"Of course our appointments were sinecures. Official individuals had nothing to do. My berth in the customs, which you were kind enough to obtain for me, might, it is true, have been a very good berth, had there been any customs; the mighty army, too, that was to have been raised might have been very mighty had there been any arms; and so might we have made the land very productive, had we possessed the power to live without food until the produce had arrived at maturity; but as matters stood, nothing could be done. We were all in a state of savagery. There was nothing like government, discipline, or order. Nor was there any respect paid to persons, as a strong proof of which it may be mentioned that in my official residence, which was of a very *recherché* build, and about four feet high, I was obliged to pig with a couple of bakers, a blacksmith, a butcher, and a barber. But that I didn't so much mind, for instead of being hypochondriacal, they were in the midst of their misfortunes philosophically jolly. We always had a concert in the evening, a sort of free-and-easy: we used to sit upon the top of the house before we retired, and singing away like nightingales, endeavoured to swindle ourselves into the belief that we were only out gipsying. And we certainly had one great comfort: we were all unmarried, and an out-and-out comfort that was, for all who were not were indeed most wretched.'

"And now I'll explain the real nature of this cruel swindle: Mac Grégor, who is safe to have his eyes scratched out if the women should ever return, had certainly the grant of the Poyaisian district: there can be no doubt about that; but it was clearly understood and set forth in the deed that nothing therein contained should be construed into a cession of the sovereignty of the country as then held by the Mosquito king. In the teeth of which, Mac Gregor's bonds are issued, as you are aware, with the preamble, "Know all men by these presents that I, Gregor Mac Gregor the First, sovereign prince of the independent state of Poyais and its dependencies, &c."—thus forfeiting the grant by the usurpation of the sovereignty, and vitiating the grants made to the emigrants by Mac Gregor for the consideration which he took care to pocket. Old Georgey, however, the Mosquito king, who is really a bit of a trump, although he issued a proclamation revoking the grant to Mac Gregor, declared his willingness to recognise the grants to the emigrants who had been swindled out of their money, provided they undertook to kick up no row in his dominions. But this, although it was well meant, was of no sort of use. The emigrants hadn't the heart to do anything. What could they do with any prospect of success? There they were, a miserable mob of deluded wretches, without a particle of spirit, and almost without hope.

"I and the barber—who was rather an insinuating little swell—viewing with the most lively feelings of apprehension the deplorable wretchedness around us, made up our minds to scour the country, in order to pick up a couple of female savages, that, by marrying them, our position in society might be somewhat improved. But just as we were on the point of starting on this expedition, a schooner appeared

My friend, who at the time was shaving me with care as I sat on the top of our piggery, first beheld her. 'More victims!—more victims!' he cried, supposing that of course she came from England; but we were soon undeceived: we soon found that she had been sent from some quarter to aid us; and now I'll explain to you how.

"I have already stated that three of the most desperate of our party stole the boat of the Kennersly Castle, and, accompanied by a few of the natives, made off for Belize. On their passage, which was not an agreeable one at all, these fellows began to play tricks with the natives, who didn't like it and wouldn't have it, and threw a couple of them overboard in consequence. The third, however, happily reached Belize; and when he had given an account of our deplorable condition, the merchants, with a promptitude which did them great credit, despatched this schooner, the Mexican Eagle, to render us all possible assistance. The captain, on landing, offered to take us all away from this blessed land of promise, and to give us a free passage to Belize—an offer at which we all jumped,—and when, for his own security, he had obtained the consent of our lieutenant-governor, he received one half of us on board, and, after a short passage, landed them in safety, and then went back for the rest; and here we all are, in comparative comfort, being treated with the utmost kindness by the inhabitants in general.

"Now, sir, of course I have no wish to remain here. I am anxious to leave as soon as possible; but cannot get away, because I have nothing in the similitude of money but these Poyaisian notes, which will *not* pass current even here. If, therefore, you will be kind enough to lend me sufficient to pay my passage home, I shall be extremely grateful, and will give you a bill at three months for the amount on my return, which bill shall ofcourse be duly honoured. Pray take my case into your kind consideration. I think you will, or I wouldn't ask you. *Do* remit me some money! Please do, Mr. Julian, and you will for ever oblige,

"Your faithful servant,

"PETER WEESENSE."

Having read this letter, George called at Bull's office; but as Cavendish was there, he, not wishing to give that gentleman quite so great a triumph, forbore to mention the subject until he had left. He then read the contents aloud to Bull, who, taking but a superficial view of the matter, laughed immoderately until George arrived at the conclusion, when he exclaimed—"Poor Peter!—But what a dreadful state they must all have been in!"

"They must have been, indeed," returned George. "And Mac Gregor, by usurping the sovereignty, has proved himself to be a vain fool as well as a villain."

"To be sure he has! The thing might have done, had it not been for that!"

"I do not, however, believe that *he* ever intended to establish a settlement there."

"Nor do I. His object was solely to raise money: but it is clear

that a settlement might have been established. But I say, my dear boy, those infuriated women! Why, if, on their return, they should happen to meet not only with Mac Gregor, but with us, we shall be torn all to pieces, we shall! They won't wait for any explanation, women won't. If they take a thing into their heads, you know, they go right at it, hit or miss; and especially when they are bent upon vengeance. We must therefore look out, my dear boy! It won't do to be sacrificed, you know, by a lot of wild women!"

"The chances are, that they will never return; but if even they should, *we* need not, I think, be under any apprehension."

"Well, if they should come back, I should'nt much like to stand in Mac Gregor's shoes! But I say, my dear boy, the vessel by which your letter came of course brought official intelligence, which is sure to be communicated in the course of the day on Change! That will stun, some of them—eh?—will it not? The thing will be knocked on the head at once, it will. The bonds will go right down to nothing!—they'll not be worth twopence apiece. We must be there to see the explosion?"

"I think that, as we are known by so many to have been connected with the business, we had better keep away: not that our abandonment of the scheme would not enable us to justify ourselves; but because we cannot with truth say that we did not believe the intentions of Mac Gregor to be dishonourable when we left him.

"Well, it will be perhaps better for us not to appear. But what do you mean to do with Peter?"

"Oh! he shall have a remittance, of course. As it was entirely through me he went out, I feel bound to send him the means of returning. I'll take care of him. But we ought, more than ever, to congratulate ourselves upon the narrow escape we have had."

For the first time, Bull quite agreed with George in viewing this as a subject for congratulation; for although it may be said that he *knew* Mac Gregor's object, and felt therefore convinced that the villanous bubble must, at no remote period, burst, his anxiety to deal in these Poyais bonds, after George had abandoned the project, could scarcely be restrained.

CHAPTER XXI.

GEORGE STARTS A COUNTRY BANK, AND RECEIVES SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

ALTHOUGH most impatient for the arrival of George at the hour appointed the previous evening, Waghorn was sedulously occupied in perfecting a scheme, by which it appeared not only that his embarrassments might be removed, but that he should be able to establish his

reputation as a man of immense wealth. He had paid so much attention to the conversation on the subject of banking at Bull's residence, that nothing had escaped him, and as his calculations proved that his immediate connexion with a provincial bank having a respectable account in London would place him in a position to carry all before him, he resolved upon making a proposition to George to the effect that they should start one forthwith.

On George's arrival, he therefore lost no time in reopening the subject: he explained to him frankly the position in which he stood, describing with the most perfect candour the difficulties by which he had been surrounded, and the means he had adopted with a view to overcome them—and having dwelt upon the advantages of which the establishment of a bank would in all probability be productive to them both, he proceeded to make his proposition in form.

This George was quite disposed to entertain, but as experience had taught him to be cautious, he deemed it expedient to take sufficient time to consider, and therefore promised to decide in a week.

During this interval he inquired into the character of Waghorn, and found that he had proceeded with so much ingenuity and tact, that even his most intimate friends knew nothing of the embarrassments of which he had spoken. They all described the stability of the firm as being beyond the possibility of doubt, and represented him as being a most diligent honourable person, one on whom the most perfect reliance might be placed.

George, therefore, notwithstanding the confession of Waghorn, that he had for some time been, and was still embarrassed, was so satisfied of his integrity, that when the week had expired, he gave his decision in favour of starting the bank.

With this decision Waghorn was delighted, and having in the interim ascertained that there was then a fine opening in one of the most important towns in Berkshire, he and George went down at once, and on finding the information they had received to be correct—there being but one bank in the town, and that essentially of the olden school, the conductors of which were extremely indisposed to put themselves out of the way for any thing—they were convinced that it *was* a fine opening indeed, and fixed upon an eligible spot before they left.

Secrecy was now a great object, and having that in view, they proceeded with the utmost caution. They secured the lease of an excellent house in the most important part of the town, and advertised for clerks who were conversant with the practical minutiæ of banking establishments, representing an intimate acquaintance with Berkshire to be a *sine quâ non*. In consequence of this advertisement being inserted in almost every paper in the county, numerous applications were made, and among the rest were three from individuals who had been for years employed in the very bank of which the new one was about to become the rival. These persons it was deemed a great point to secure, and notwithstanding they were all rather elderly men, George engaged them. He also engaged two persons whose connexions in Berk-

shire were extensive, who knew intimately the principles of almost every firm of importance in the county, and who possessed many other qualifications calculated to render them valuable agents.

The names of these persons were Stevens and Carlton; and as Waghorn had of course no wish for his name to appear, seeing that one of his grand objects was to have the endorsement of the bank on his accommodation bills, in order that he might negociate them more freely, and as George moreover had no desire to put forth his name, he being known to so many as a speculative man—a fact which he thought might create a want of confidence—an arrangement was made with Stevens and Carlton, by which, in consideration of allowing their names to appear, they were to have not only handsome salaries, but a certain per centage upon the *bonâ fide* profits of the bank.

This having been settled, the note-plates were ordered, and the house which they had taken was painted and furnished in really magnificent style, the furniture, which was sent down from London, being of the most elegant description.

George, however, prided himself most upon the appearance of the bank itself. Every thing looked like business: firearms were fixed upon brackets as a prescriptive matter of course, and while the shelves were loaded with padlocked boxes, the large iron chests were extremely well displayed.

Being anxious to commence with some little *éclat*, George had proposed that they should start with a capital of four thousand pounds in equal shares, and as this proposition was agreed to by Waghorn, a correspondence was opened with a firm of long standing and high respectability in Pall Mall, the result of which was their consent to take the account of Stevens, Carlton, and Co., and a deposit of two thousand pounds was accordingly lodged in their hands.

The whole of the preliminaries being now arranged, the bank opened, and the value of both Stevens and Carlton soon began to appear. Stevens attended all the markets within a circle of thirty miles, and, being well known, succeeded in exchanging for the notes of distant bankers those of Stevens, Carlton, and Co.; and thus, although the bank incurred the expense of collection, forced into circulation their own notes, which being promptly paid on presentation soon inspired confidence in the public mind. He also contracted an intimacy with many highly respectable brewers, maltsters, clothiers, and others. With the brewers who bought malt for cash, and with the maltsters who on the same terms bought barley, he made an arrangement by which they undertook to pay away the notes of Stevens, Carlton, and Co. at all the markets they were in the habit of attending, which notes were to be obtained from the bank without charge, on their lodging their own promissory notes payable on demand; and every week an account was delivered of the notes which had come in for payment—the numbers having been of course previously taken—when the amount of those which had made their appearance was paid by the brewers and maltsters in cash.

While Stevens was working his way at a distance, Carlton was equally active in the town. He ingratiated himself with almost all the respectable inhabitants, and more especially with the most substantial tradesmen, affording them every accommodation they required of doing, which the managers of the old bank had never even dreamed. Nor did he fail to propitiate the innkeepers, who in consequence extensively recommended the bank. If a traveller wanted a draft on London, Stevens, Carlton, and Co's. was, of course, the bank to go to; if he wished to exchange the notes of bankers at a distance, it could be done at the bank of Stevens, Carlton, and Co. In short, by virtue of an admirable management, the bank of Stevens, Carlton, and Co. soon became the most popular bank in the county.

Of course, the managers of the old bank did not like the new one at all. They opposed it in every direction, circulated many prejudicial reports, and displayed even more animosity than might have been expected. *They* wouldn't take the notes of Stevens, Carlton, and Co.—they wouldn't look at them—not they, indeed! *Who* were Stevens, Carlton, and Co.? They only wished to know where they sprang from.

For some time George took no notice of this species of annoyance, conceiving ill-will on their part to be to some extent natural; but as he found that it, instead of diminishing, increased, he at length, after vainly expostulating with them, resolved to put a stop to it at once. He therefore directed a general collection of the notes of the old bank, with which one of his clerks attended at the counter of that establishment with the utmost regularity every evening, and demanded gold. This was done to an average extent of two thousand pounds per week, which of itself was rather a serious affair; but, in order to make the thing still more pleasant, George had a plate beautifully engraved with the name of the firm of Stevens, Carlton, and Co., and plastered an impression of this plate across the face of every note that came into his possession, which shook the resolution of the managers of the old bank, who all at once became extremely *happy* to take the notes of Stevens, Carlton, and Co., and to exchange in the regular way once a week.

While, however, George was thus engaged in establishing the bank on a sure foundation, he did not forget Fred's claim. On the contrary, having received no answer to the advertisement, and therefore despairing of being able to effect a private settlement, he had instructed an attorney to commence proceedings forthwith.

The first step, however, had scarcely been taken, when George received a letter, signed O. P. Q., and written in a cramped, disguised hand, in which the writer requested to know if the reward which had been offered would be paid, in the event of the required information being given, without a personal interview.

To this letter George replied by advertisement, as directed, to the effect that, before he could answer the question, he must be informed not only of the names which were extracted, but of the process by

which they were removed; adding, that if such information were given, an answer would be immediately returned.

This advertisement, which appeared in the *Morning Herald*, was unnoticed for several days; but at length a letter was sent, signed as before, describing the names which were extracted, explaining the process, and stating that every information should be given, provided the writer could be assured of the reward, and that, for his own security, he should not be expected to give up the name of the person who employed him: to which George replied, that if no other ingredient than that described were used in discharging the ink, the money would be paid without a personal interview, in the event of the necessary information being given,—that the sum should be lodged in the hands of a London banker, in the joint names of his attorney and any friend whom O. P. Q. might appoint, to be paid over, if the information being proved to be correct,—with an additional hundred pounds, as an inducement to O. P. Q. to explain the precise means by which he obtained possession of the book.

No time was lost in replying to this: a letter was sent on the following day, naming a solicitor, agreeing to the conditions, and stating that, as soon as the money had been lodged, as proposed, the solicitor in question would deliver a letter containing all the information required.

George then went to his solicitor; and when he had explained to him all that had occurred, they proceeded at once to the attorney whom O. P. Q. had named, and who accompanied them to the banker's, where the money was deposited, with an agreement, embodying the conditions proposed; and when this had been effected, a letter was delivered to George, of which the contents were as follow:—

"Sir,

"From the nature of the advertisement to which I first replied, I am induced to suspect that I have been in some measure, by the person who employed me, betrayed. If such be the case—if you can show me that it is so—I hereby declare that I will give up his name. If, however, there has been no treachery on his part, the secret is still essential to my own security; and as I have no other fear of detection—being at that time known only by the assumed name of Richardson; and being, moreover, sufficiently disguised—I have nothing to communicate now but the facts.

"About fifteen months ago, this person—with whom I had had several bill transactions—commissioned me to destroy the registry of the marriage in question; for which service I was to receive the sum of five hundred pound; one hundred of which was to be paid down at once, and the remainder when the thing had been effected.

"Accordingly having obtained all necessary information with respect to the village, and so on, I received the first hundred, and went down alone. The church was at that time under repair, and on being informed that the register was kept at the house of the curate, I called there, and found that the marriage was entered as described. I at first thought

of cutting out the leaves, which I could have done at once; but as I knew that that was punishable with death, and that I should always be at the mercy of my employer, of whom I had some doubt, and who might have refused to perform his part of the contract, I hesitated, and left.

"The curate had a daughter, whom I particularly noticed on entering the cottage, and who, in return, I thought rather particularly noticed me; and flattering myself that I knew something of the female character, it occurred to me that through her instrumentality I might accomplish in another way all that was required, save myself, in some measure, from the consequences of the act, and have, at the same time, the power of compelling him who employed me to fulfil the engagement into which he had entered.

"I therefore at once returned to town, and had an interview with this person, who was greatly disappointed at my not having cut out the leaves. I excused myself by stating that I had thought of a plan by which the object proposed could be attained in a manner far preferable in every respect—pointed out to him the danger of cutting out the leaves, as suspicion would be sure to be awakened, and the real facts probably proved, when the mutulation of the book should be discovered; and explained to him a process by which the ink might be extracted from the paper which could afterwards be so prepared as to enable me to insert other names without the chance of creating the slightest suspicion, and thus to set detection at defiance. He admitted that this was a preferable course, and inquired how I proposed to obtain possession of the book, and when I told him that I expected to accomplish that through the medium of the old curate's daughter, he seemed to think it impossible! Feeling, however, sure of eventual success, I returned to effect the object in the manner proposed.

"It is not, sir, with any paltry view of setting forth my own tact that I am now about to explain to you how I proceeded: I do it solely because I feel myself bound to give you this explanation in order that the truth of my statement may not in any particular be doubted.

"As the curate was exceedingly careful of his daughter, and as the girl herself was of a timid retiring disposition, I found the task I had undertaken to be one of far greater difficulty than I had imagined. In a few days, however, by dint of perseverance, I succeeded in making a manifest impression. Still I was compelled to be extremely cautious, and as I found that the curate began to make some inquiries having reference to the object of my visit to the place, I took especial care to have it represented to him that my object was his daughter, of whom I was desperately enamoured. I then obtained an interview with him, and declared my attachment with apparent sincerity and candour; but as he still refused to sanction my visits to the house, I changed my course, and by virtue of bribery managed to propitiate the favour of the old housekeeper, through whose instrumentality I obtained private interviews with her mistress, whose name if I recollect rightly was Lydia.

"As a matter of course, she believed my protestations to be as

sincere as they were warm; and although she continued to be anxious to conceal it, that very anxiety convinced me that her affections had been won.

"Having proceeded thus far, I directed my immediate attention to the register. I endeavoured to induce the belief that I derived more amusement from parish registers in general than from any other records extant, and tried to prevail upon her to procure for me privately the register of that particular parish, in order that, by allowing me to take it to the inn, I might gratify my curiosity which had been, by a brief perusal of it, strongly excited.

"To do this, however, she declined. Her papa always kept it locked up and never by any *accident* left the key about. She was indeed very sorry that she could not oblige me, but if even the safe were on any occasion left open, she should feel that she was doing very wrong to lend me the book without obtaining his consent.

"Notwithstanding this decided refusal, I did not despair. The register I was determined to have, and as I then knew that I could not immediately obtain it, I felt that my only plan was to inspire her with more confidence in me than ever.

"While this was being effected, the fact of our having private interviews by some means came to the ears of the curate; and as he naturally felt that it would be better under the circumstances to receive me on being assured of my respectability and so on—an assurance which, of course, I was ready to give—he sent for me, and when I succeeded in painting my character, prospects, and connexions, to his entire satisfaction, he, having the happiness of his daughter only in view, consented to offer no further opposition to my visits.

"With this consent Lydia was delighted. It inspired her with the most lively hopes. Her joy was unbounded; and this induced me to imagine that her confidence in me was unbounded too: but on alluding to the subject of the register again, I found I had my work to do still. The great difficulty, however, consisted not perhaps so much in want of confidence on her part, as in the belief she entertained that, in taking the book from the safe without the knowledge of her father, she should be committing an act of gross disobedience. She begged of me earnestly to allow her to mention the subject to him. She was perfectly sure that *he* would have no objection. She was prepared to pledge her existence that, if he were informed that I had so strong a desire to peruse the book alone, he would with infinite pleasure let me take it to the inn with me. But I knew better!—and I forbade her to mention the subject to him, on the ground that he would be certain to consider my curiosity childish.

"At length, finding it impossible to overcome that which she conceived to be her duty by any other means, I treated her coolly and thus made her wretched. I would not have done it, for she was really a good girl, had there been the slightest chance of my object being accomplished in any other way; but there was not; she was proof against all persuasion, and therefore compelled me to alter my tone.

At first she tried to guess the cause of this sudden change; but being unable to do that successfully, she had recourse to gentle expostulation. 'How had she offended me!—What had she done?—If she had said the slightest word to annoy me, she was indeed very sorry, and hoped that I would forgive her; but she could not but think it rather cruel to treat her so without explaining the cause.' Poor girl! I was sorry for her; but business must be attended to, sir; and as the business I had then in hand was of the utmost importance to me, seeing that I happened to be then rather poor, I was determined that no obstacle which I could remove, should continue to stand in the way of its accomplishment. I therefore told her plainly that she had deceived me—that she had taught me to believe that her confidence in me was unlimited; and when she assured me that it really was, I replied that I never should be satisfied of it, until she had procured for me that register: not that I particularly wanted it; no, but because it was the only proof of confidence she then had the power to afford me.

"This was sufficient. Her scruples were hushed. That night I had the register.

"I took it with me to the inn, where I extracted the names by the process which in my former communication I described, not only in the body of the book but in the index, and having prepared the paper, I wrote the names which now appear with *sympathetic* ink, in order that I might have an additional hold upon the person who employed me; and having thus made all secure, I returned the book on the following morning, and expressed myself of course quite satisfied that Lydia had confidence in me indeed.

"My object now being accomplished, I prepared to return to town, and as I had previously invited the curate to accompany me, in order that he might at once be introduced to my connexions, we started by the coach the next day, and I scarcely need add, that immediately on our arrival in London, I left him.

"And now, sir, I think that this is all the information you require as far as the facts of the case are concerned. If, however, there should be any point which demands a more minute explanation, I shall feel myself bound to afford it; and I beg to repeat, sir, that if, as I am led to suspect, you can show that there has been any treachery on the part of the person by whom I was employed in this business, I shall not only feel much obliged by your putting me on my guard, but will instantly send you his name.

"I am, Sir, &c., &c.,

"O. P. Q."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CONSULTATION.

HAVING read this letter of O. P. Q., so distinctly proving the correctness of his conjectures, George felt quite certain that all was secure; and as the solicitor on perusing it was equally sanguine, it was considered expedient to have counsel's opinion upon it at once. They therefore immediately proceeded to the chambers of the counsel engaged in the suit—one of the first equity lawyers of the day—and when the following morning had been fixed for the consultation, George returned with the view of communicating to Fred the important information which the letter contained.

Fred of course was delighted. He felt that every hope he had inspired was now about to be realised indeed; and his expressions of thankfulness to George, although ardent in the extreme, were certainly not more warm than sincere.

"But who could have employed this man?" he exclaimed; "this person—this vile O. P. Q!"

"Your cousin, of course!" replied George.

"Surely not," rejoined Fred: "surely he would never dream of an action so base!"

"Is there any other man in existence, with the exception of this O. P. Q., whose interests would be promoted by its accomplishment? Have you any knowledge of such a man?"

"I certainly have not."

"Then I think it abundantly clear that this person was prompted by him. I am not, I hope, too prone to jump at conclusions prejudicial to any man; but this is in my view so palpable, that I cannot even entertain a doubt. The property rests between you and him, and the entry of this marriage alone could complete the chain of evidence required to establish your claim. That link has been removed. At whose suggestion? Who is likely to have suggested its removal? Who but your cousin Joseph! What other man could deem it worth his while to give four hundred pounds, Fred, to have it removed?"

"It does look suspicious."

"Suspicious! the thing is certain. But do you know this hand? It strikes me I have seen something like it before."

"It is a disguised hand evidently."

"It is; still I think that I have seen it before. However, the thing is sufficiently straightforward now to render success no longer doubtful. We have nothing to fear; we have but to prosecute the matter with spirit, and the day is our own."

Fred held the same opinion, and while George was making arrangements for remaining a few days in town, he hastened with the letter to Julia and Helen, who, in eloquent terms, expressed the pleasure and the pain they at once derived from its perusal. It was, however, precisely

of course what they had expected. Oh! they felt sure that it would be so from what George had told them! He had *said* that the thing would turn out to be thus, and therefore they could have no doubt upon the subject. And he was indeed their oracle, while the confidence they had in his judgment and zeal was so unbounded, that the fact of his taking a matter in hand—however hopeless its accomplishment might to others appear—was sufficient to enable them to feel well convinced of the result being perfectly successful. They hence viewed Fred as a rich man already, and the warm congratulations of Helen that evening delighted him more than the prospect of wealth which he then had in view.

Having made all necessary arrangements, George and Fred, at the hour appointed the following morning, attended at the chambers of counsel, and were immediately introduced by their attorney to an eccentric individual who repudiated all such clothing as might tend to impart beauty to his person, and who evidently held a tight fit in especial contempt. His professional coat was particularly greasy, and while his trousers hung about him as loosely as if they had been designed for a man nearly double his size, there existed an aperture of several inches at the waist, through which bulged a very fair proportion of his linen, apparently anxious to be aired. He was a person, notwithstanding this foppery—and it was evident that he prided himself as much upon the style of his dress as the most affected exquisite of the age—whose talent was so conspicuously developed, that he could neither look nor speak without inducing the conviction of his being no ordinary man. He was, moreover, excessively polite; nay, he might have appeared graceful had his clothes fitted better; but as they really didn't show his figure off to any advantage at all, he looked, while performing his courteous evolutions, as if he had made up his mind then and there, to give himself one good shake, and thus to get rid of the incumbrance altogether.

After making a few brief preliminary observations, the attorney placed O. P. Q.'s letter before him, and of all the faces that ever were made up by man, those which he, of course unconsciously, presented to their view while perusing this letter, were of a character the most extraordinary. He tortured his muscles in the most remarkable manner, and twisted them about with amazing facility. Now would his shaggy brows be pursed with surpassing tightness, then his thick nether-lip would jut boldly out in the shape of a spoon, anon one entire side of his face would be screwed up precisely as if he intended to telegraph a wink to the most remote quarter of the globe: in short, no man, either in ancient or modern times, ever witnessed grimaces at all comparable with them. George dared not look at him; and while the attorney very properly tried to preserve his usual aspect of solemnity, the efforts which Fred made to suppress a loud laugh—which he feared would burst forth after all—were so strong, that they threw him into a most unpleasant state of perspiration.

Having sufficiently dwelt upon the various points which the letter suggested, this remarkable person proceeded to advise that a motion on affidavits, embodying all the circumstances of the case, should be forth-

with made before the Lord Chancellor, who would in all probability direct an issue to try the question of the entry of the marriage—although it might be necessary to obtain the consent of the Ecclesiastical Court to the removal of the registry to London, with a view to the reproduction of the original entry—a course which he stated would be highly advantageous, seeing that while it would show the opposite party what important information they possessed, it might induce them to make such overtures as might tend to an immediate settlement.

As this view was highly approved by George, Fred, and the attorney, who entirely lost sight of the eccentricities of the man, while hearing him deliver his opinion, it was decided at once that that course should be pursued, and the consultation ended.

The first step now was to procure the affidavits, and with this view George and the attorney, who felt a great interest in the case, paid a visit to the curate, to whom, after having prepared him by briefly explaining its contents, they handed the letter for his perusal.

The curate trembled as the letter was placed in his hand, but made no observation: nor did he utter a syllable until he had read every word, when he exclaimed "It is all too true!"

"Now," said George, "notwithstanding we have proceeded thus far, I do not believe that this affair will be made public: unless, therefore, you desire Mr. Whomp and Mr. Swiggles to see this letter, it is not at all necessary that its contents should be known even to them."

"Oh, but I should wish them to see it," returned the curate. "I should wish them to know how the book was obtained; for although I do not believe that they would think evil of me, it is possible that I may be suspected of having a guilty knowledge of the matter."

"Well then," said George, "as we require them to make affidavits in confirmation of yours, you will probably send for them at once?"

"Certainly," replied the curate, who called to a man who was working in the garden, and having given him the necessary instructions, rang the bell for the housekeeper.

"Mrs. Jones," said he calmly, but with the most impressive earnestness, as she entered the room, "Mrs. Jones, I am sorry to say that I have reason to fear that the confidence I have reposed in you has been to a certain extent misplaced. I will not, however condemn you without a hearing, and in order that you may be the better able to defend yourself, I will read to you the precise terms in which the accusation is conveyed, begging of you, whether you are innocent or guilty, to adhere with solemn strictness to the truth."

He then turned to that part of the letter in which the writer stated that by virtue of bribery he managed through her instrumentality to obtain private interviews with Lydia, and having read it distinctly, he added, "Is this true or not?"

Mrs. Jones made no sort of reply: she covered her face with her apron, and wept, but she uttered no word.

"Did you or did you not," he demanded with awful solemnity, "accept a bribe from that bad man whose presence we have all so much reason to deplore?"

Mrs. Jones was still silent.

"Did you, or did you not, Mrs. Jones," pursued the curate, "sanction private interviews, in consequence, between him and my poor Lydia?"

Mrs. Jones sobbed aloud, but returned no answer.

"I am sorry," added the curate, "to say, that I am ashamed of your conduct, Mrs. Jones. You may retire."

It will perhaps be abundantly manifest to many, that Mrs. Jones might have made a much better defence; and an opinion may be hazarded that had she employed counsel she would have adopted a different course; but as she hadn't, she didn't: she thus left the room sobbing with bitterness and zeal.

The curate now began to explain how firmly he had relied on the discretion of Mrs. Jones, and when he had ventured to illustrate the fact that men are occasionally most deceived by those in whom they happen to have reposed the most confidence, Whomp and his little friend Swiggles arrived.

As they entered, George rose and shook hands with them both, and when he had explained to them the object of his visit, he read the important letter aloud.

At first Swiggles, assuming a highly authoritative aspect, sat firmly in his chair, with his cheek upon his hand, as if nothing had the power to amaze or to move him; but as George proceeded, he warmed upon the subject, and became extremely fidgetty, while Whomp scratched his ear and interposed a variety of novel ejaculations having a tendency to show that his firm opinion was that the nature of things must soon change.

"The world's too far gone!" he exclaimed, when George had read the whole of the letter. "We must have another universal deluge to wash all this artfulness away!"

"But what a villain he must be!" observed Swiggles.

"A villain!" echoed Whomp. "It's enough to make a man's flesh crawl off his bones."

"Now, gentlemen," said George, "as we can only proceed on affidavits, of course you will willingly state all you know having reference to the change in the colour of the ink?"

"Most undoubtedly," replied Mr. Swiggles; "and I'll also state just what I think of the whole concern."

"And so will I," added Whomp; "I'd go to the world's end to punish that unheard-of wretch. It's enough to make the eagles come down and peck our eyes out. I wonder we are suffered to live upon the earth at all!"

The attorney smiled and then proceeded to business; but while preparing the affidavits, he utterly astonished both Swiggles and Whomp by his indisposition to follow their eloquent comments on the facts. They couldn't at all understand it. They wished him to state their opinions in full—to describe what they thought of this base individual, and how in their judgment he ought to be served. This they held to be essential to the due course of justice, and were highly dissatisfied on being informed that all that was required of them was a plain straightforward statement of facts

Their affidavits were consequently short, for all they absolutely knew of the matter had reference solely to the fading of the ink: still they tended to strengthen the affidavit of the curate, which was drawn at considerable length, as it embodied nearly the whole of the facts, and when every thing requisite had been accomplished, George and the attorney returned to town.

Two other affidavits were then made—one by George and the other by Fred; and on the following day notice of motion was served on the opposite parties, to whom copies of all the affidavits were voluntarily supplied, and the consequence was an application on the part of the solicitor of Joseph Broadbridge, to postpone the motion for ten days, in order that he might have an opportunity of communicating with his client, who was stated to be then out of town—an application which was at once entertained, it being believed that in the interim overtures would be made, and the motion was postponed for ten days accordingly.

CHAPTER XXIII.

JULIA AND HELEN VISIT THE VILLAGE.

As Lydia's afflicting case had excited a considerable degree of interest and curiosity in the minds of Julia and Helen, they now endeavoured to prevail upon George to take them down to the village, in order that they might not only see the poor girl, but invite her and the curate to spend a few days with them in town.

To this George at first felt indisposed to accede—at least he thought the invitation had better be deferred—but as he subsequently considered that the presence of the curate might soon be required in London, he, as a matter of policy, consented to go with them on the following day.

In the morning they accordingly started, and on reaching the inn at which George and Fred had previously put up, they had some slight refreshment, ordered dinner for six, and then proceeded on foot towards the village.

"How dearly," said Julia, as they walked across the fields in the full enjoyment of the calm scene around them, "how dearly I should like to see the shepherd of whom you spoke."

"Oh! that would indeed be a treat!" exclaimed Helen.

"There he is," said George, "sitting in his old position, and under the same tree. I wonder what on earth such a man has to occupy his mind? We'll approach him."

They did so; and the old man rose, and on recognising George, bowed respectfully and said,

"Your most obedient. Lovely weather,
For you and the ladies to walk out together."

"The weather is delightful enough," said George smiling; "but a woman is a troublesome creature to walk with, as you are aware."

"She's like an angel, beautiful;
And when she's also dutiful,
Her duty imparts a new light to her beauty—
For nothing so well becomes beauty as duty—
Her heart is lighter,
Her eyes are brighter;
And he who would blight her,
Or fright her,
Or slight her,
Deserves to be tied by the leg, even tighter
Than he who has no sense or reason to guide him;
And, when tied, all right-minded men should deride him."

"You are very severe," observed George. "But you speak of her duty. What do you imagine her duty to be?"

Why, as a wife—
And, upon my life,
I think that a bride
Is now by your side.
You'll pardon me
For being so free;
I'm an old man, madam, as you may see,
And probably privileged free to be.
But, to return: she, as a wife,
Should, throughout life, abhor all strife.
Be gentle, loving, faithful, mild,
And never let her thoughts run wild.
If matters should by chance go wrong,
Why she should hope that things ere long
Will change: but she should ne'er complain,
For at such times men feel most pain.
If she with children should be blest,
'Tis well: if not, why let her rest
Content; for if our joys they double,
They also bring us double trouble.
Whate'er the state of her husband's purse,
Whether quite full or the reverse,
To him should she fondly cling till death,
And bless him with her latest breath."

"And now," said Julia, archly, "what is in your view the duty of a husband?"

"My opinion is this—
He should kiss
No miss,
If he dreams of a life of connubial bliss.
All roving desires within him should perish,
His wife he should fondly love, honour, and cherish.

It should be his pride
In her faith to confide.
He should also be generous, virtuous, and brave;
Bear up against crosses,
And all sorts of losses,
Which is, ever has been, and will be for ever, the best way to smoothe the rough path to the grave.
Let a man run away
From a trouble to day,
And to-morrow 'twill follow him hot.
Whereas, should he face it,
And, if it turn, chase it,
He'll see it go off like a shot.

MORAL.

He who the blows of misfortune can't parry,
Receives them all flush, and ought never to marry."

"That's very correct," said George. "But do you not think that the ladies in general are treated too kindly?"

"He who is ironical
Is always economical
In dealing what he deems just praise,
When they are present whom he loves to raise.
I've often seen men ardent in the cause
Of those for whom they have not cared two straws;
While others have most warmly stigmatised
The very virtues they most highly prized."

"He is well understood," observed Julia.

"Of that I've no doubt.
You would probably pout,
If you fancied he meant
That he'd cause to repent,
Or to vent
An ill feeling: but that's not his bent."

"But tell me," said George, "how do you amuse yourself day after day? What have you to think of?"

"A man plays many parts in fourscore years,
Feels many joys—sheds many bitter tears:
Hopes wither; bosom friends around him fall,
Whom to his mind at least he can recal,
With all the castles which he built i' th' air,
And found when perfect that they were not there.
These things a calm reflecting man will find
Amply sufficient to amuse his mind.
And if in these his interest should abate,
Let him look forward to a future state.
What will it be? The imagination swells
Whene'er on this dread mystery it dwells,
In that alone a man finds ample scope
For contemplation, teeming with sweet hope."

"You are right, my friend, quite right," said George; at the same time making him a liberal present. "Your mind, I perceive, need not be unemployed. Farewell."

"Farewell, sir!—ladies, fare ye well!
On gratitude I will not dwell,
But as mine is without alloy,
I wish you health, wealth, peace, and joy!"

He then bowed profoundly, and when the ladies, who were delighted, had taken their leave, the party proceeded towards the village.

"Well," said George, having got some distance from him; "what think you of the shepherd? Has he realized your anticipations?"

"Oh, yes!" replied Julia, "he has indeed exceeded them. I did not expect that his rhymes would flow so freely."

"Had not the subjects been suggested at the moment," observed Helen, "I should have been inclined to imagine that he had got the lines by rote. But of course that is perfectly impossible: he could not have known, if he had even expected us, what sort of questions were about to be proposed."

"And especially," added Julia, "such questions as those put by George. But he really is a dear of an old man; I should like to come down here occasionally if it were only to hear him."

They now approached the cottage, with the lovely appearance of which Julia and Helen were charmed; but as they entered the garden and saw poor Lydia adjusting a stand of geraniums, while the curate was reading in the arbour, all their interest was immediately centered in them.

Lydia was the first to hear their footsteps as they walked up the newly gravelled path, and turned suddenly round; but instead of rushing wildly to George, and throwing her arms round his neck as before, she flew, as if for protection, to the curate, who at once rose to meet them.

"I have a thousand apologies to make for this intrusion," said George.

"I am far too happy to see you to need one," replied the curate; "I knew that you would not keep me long in suspense."

Julia and Helen were then presented, and after gracefully complimenting the curate on the beauty of the cottage, they took Lydia's arm, and promenaded the garden, while George was explaining what progress had been made.

"You have just come in time, dears!" said Lydia: "I am so delighted to see you!—It is to be to-morrow!" she added, in a confidential whisper, assuming an expression of ecstacy. "Oh! it will be such joy!—we shall all be so *happy!*"

Here she passionately kissed them and burst into tears.

Both Julia and Helen, while endeavouring to soothe her, wept too; but this she no sooner saw than she turned to comfort *them:* she embraced them, and kissed them, and wiped away their tears, and begged of them in tones of surpassing sweetness to be calm.

'My tears are tears of joy!" she added, "I weep because I am so happy, so very, very happy." And she then wept again.

The curate now joined them, and having invited them to enter the cottage to take some refreshment, intimated that it would be at least an hour before they dined.

"You are aware, of course," said Julia, "that we hope to have the pleasure of your company, and that of dear Lydia, at the inn?"

"I had forgotten to name it while speaking of business," said George, who came up at the moment; "but you must do us the favour to dine with us to day?"

"Had you not better remain here?" observed the curate.

"Oh, no," replied George; "come, the change will do you good, and I'm sure that it will be greatly beneficial to Lydia. The dinner is already ordered."

"Yes; do return with us," said Julia, "much as I am delighted with this little paradise of yours, you must not detain us to day. Do favour us? You *will* go?"

The curate consented, and they entered the cottage, where they had some seed cake, and home made wine; and when Lydia, whose mind had become much more tranquil, was ready, they proceeded across the fields towards the inn.

As Julia took the arm of the curate she had of course an opportunity of conversing with him on the subject of his daughter's affliction, and as this conversation led to the object of her visit, she explained to him that object, and expressed an earnest hope that she might in a very few days have the pleasure of receiving them in town.

The curate endeavoured to excuse himself by stating that he seldom left the village—that he felt his social qualities to be poor—that they would find his society uninteresting and dull, and that he could not for a moment think of troubling them with the care of his poor afflicted child; but Julia was indisposed to receive any excuse, and endeavoured to overrule all his objections.

"I do not pretend," she observed, "to any peculiar knowledge of the mind; I do not pretend to any skill in the removal of those diseases which are incidental to it; but I do notwithstanding believe that if Lydia were to live but a short time with me, the change would tend to restore her."

The curate moved his head sorrowfully and sighed.

"Unless," said he, after a pause, "it please God to restore her, all hope of restoration is vain."

"Will you pardon me," said Julia, with great deference, "if what I am now about to urge be improper?"

The curate gazed at her for a moment, and then motioned her to proceed.

"Dependence upon the great Author of our being," she continued, "is our first and greatest duty: we are taught to place our whole trust and confidence in Him. But should we, when affliction assails us, be passive?—should we set aside those means of restoration at our com-

mand, instead of employing them and praying to him to render them effectual? But I feel that I am too presumptuous—"

"Not at all! not at all!" said the curate. "I like to hear you, because I find that while employing those means, you would confide notwithstanding in His mercy. I must not be understood to mean that if calamities befall us we should make no effort to remove them; if I had entertained that belief I should not have made the exertions I have made with a view to the removal of poor Lydia's affliction; but when every effort we have the power to make proves vain, the conviction follows that restoration depends upon His will alone."

"I have not the slightest doubt," rejoined Julia, "that all you believed you had the power to do has been done in this case; but *have* you ever tried change of scene?"

"Why I cannot say that that has ever been fairly tried."

"Well then, let it be fairly tried now. Do let me prevail upon you to visit us if it be but for a week. I think that I can perceive a change in her already, and I am sure that a week's residence with us—if it should not completely restore her—will do her an immense deal of good. Say that you will come?"

The curate promised to "turn it over in his mind," and soon after this promise was given they arrived at the inn, where Julia and Helen retired with Lydia, who became before dinner was announced quite calm and collected. Her questions were rational, while her answers were strictly to the point, and although she still laboured under the delusion that she was going to be married "to-morrow"—which to-morrow was to have been every day during the previous twelvemonth—there was nothing fantastic or wild in her observations, while she evidently appreciated the affectionate attentions of her new friends highly.

During dinner she was silent. The novelty of the position in which she was placed—for to her the position was novel—seemed to make her apprehensive of committing herself, and whenever she made any slight mistake, induced by the embarrassment of the moment, the consciousness of it would cause her to blush so deeply that her neck, arms, and face were absolutely crimson.

This sensitiveness tended to convince all but the curate, that her mind s disease was not too deeply rooted to be removed, and although her embarrassment was apparently unnoticed—for she glanced at them all constantly with the view of ascertaining if that which she felt to be her awkwardness was observed—Julia managed to make the curate, who sat on her right, admit that a change of scene was calculated to be highly beneficial, and having accomplished that, she very soon induced him to promise to spend a week at least with them in town

"You have never been in London, dear, have you?" said Julia, when this promise had been obtained.

"Never," replied Lydia; "but I am going to-morrow."

"You'll be delighted with the place, I am sure!"

"That I am convinced of. We are going directly we come from church to-morrow."

"You will call upon us?"

"*That* I will!" replied the affectionate girl, as the tears came into her eyes. "I *would* not neglect to do that for the world! You are so good, so kind! and I am *indeed* grateful—very grateful—you do not know how dearly I love you. Bless you! bless all! I am happy —very—very happy now; but I shall be more happy to-morrow."

There was a tear in every eye: and every heart was filled with sympathy: they could have wept like children; but made a strong effort to conceal their emotions—an effort which by virtue of George changing the subject, was successful.

They then freely conversed on the various topics of the day—Julia and Helen exciting the curiosity of Lydia, while George and Fred inspired the curate with wonder, until the time for their departure had arrived, when they took leave of the good old man and his daughter—whose heart they had evidently won—and returned to town with feelings of intense satisfaction.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN WHICH GEORGE BECOMES DEEPLY INVOLVED.

It being now essential to the progress of this history to return to Sir Richard, Julia's father, it will in the first place be proper to state that nothing having reference to the marriage of his daughter annoyed him so much as the fact of his never having been applied to for assistance. He would have been delighted—incredible as it may to the virtuous appear—had his child, his only child, been reduced to actually beggary in order that he might have trampled upon her feelings and pointed to the fulfilment of his prediction with an air of triumph. Letters had been sent to him by Julia, with a view to a reconciliation—she had implored his forgiveness, and prayed for permission to crave his blessing on her knees, but in vain; her destitution alone could content him: an application for pecuniary assistance was that which he panted to receive; but as assistance was not required, no such application came.

Now it has been observed that Sir Richard during the war had been engaged in the iron trade in which, by virtue of a series of successful speculations, he realised a very considerable fortune; but it has yet to be mentioned that after his retirement from business, a great portion of his property was invested in a coal mine in Northumberland, which had been for many years highly productive, and which continued to yield the proprietors immense profits, with every prospect of its value being increased. The position of this mine was immediately on the coast, and the proprietors had caused it to be worked a considerable distance

under the sea, beneath which the chief basin was situated, for the farther they went the more valuable the seams became; while the dip being immense, and the superincumbent strata forming an arch which seemed to defy the ponderous weight of the ocean above, they were still tempted onwards, until one fatal morning, while the workmen at the extremity were blasting a huge piece of coal, the sea rushed in upon them, drowned three hundred men, and destroyed the mine for ever.

This calamity reduced many of the proprietors to utter destitution; and although Sir Richard was not quite so deeply involved, it occurred at a time when other circumstances had conspired to render his mind ill-calculated to bear it. He had just lost twenty thousand pounds by the treasurer of the county, and another defaulter for whom he was surety had induced him to incur liabilities to the extent of nearly twenty thousand more, and therefore when the heavy news of the destruction of the mine arrived, it drove him almost mad.

It also happened at this particular period, that Fred's cousin Joseph, for reasons which will sufficiently appear anon, offered to point out to Tynte—with whom he had been for some considerable time connected—means by which he might have his revenge upon George, and enrich himself at the same time, intimating that whatever money might be required for the purpose he would willingly supply, on the understanding that if the affair succeeded it should be deemed to be a fair set off against any claim which Tynte might conceive he had upon him.

Being highly indignant with George, and of course always anxious to enrich himself, no matter by what means, Tynte readily consented, and expressed his anxiety for an immediate explanation. This, however, did not suit the views of Joseph Broadbridge, who endeavoured to excuse himself on the ground that secrecy was so absolutely essential to success that it would be inexpedient to explain more than one step at a time.

"But I presume," said Tynte, "that I shall be as much interested in preserving secrecy as you will!"

"I propose no advantage to myself," returned Joseph, "I do it for your sake solely."

"Then what do you take me for?" cried Tynte, who invariably when addressing him, felt himself privileged to assume a blustering tone, "do you take me for a child or a fool? I am a man of the world, and you know it! Do you think *I'll* consent to be led step by step in the dark? How do *I* know where you would lead me?"

"I would lead you on to fortune!—that's *my* only object!"

"Well then, why not explain at once how it's to be done? What's the first step?"

"Why I'd propose that in the first place apartments be taken in some quiet part of the town, and that flaming advertisements, offering to advance sums of money on good personal security, be inserted in all the London papers."

"What, in order that Julian may be caught? *Do* you think him such an idiot?"

"No; but I think that he would discount some of the bills thus obtained, and be thereby let in pretty deeply."

"Not he," replied Tynte. "He's too cautious. You don't know the man."

"But don't you think that if a bill of one of his friends were to be brought to him for discount, he'd do it if he felt that it was safe?"

"Why yes, that I believe. I believe that he would do such a bill if he thought that there was even a chance of its being safe."

"Very well then: the channel through which I'll undertake to send some of these advertisements will bring back such bills! Of that I feel certain. Will you try it?"

"Oh, I'll *try* it. But how am I to get them to him? *I* can't take them: nor will he have anything to do with them if he should know that they come through my hands."

"Procure them first. We'll find means to get them to him. Neither you nor your name need appear."

Very well. Tynte thought this clear and straightforward enough. It was an old game of his: he had played it again and again with success, and therefore of course set to work *con amore;* engaged apartments in a certain quiet street leading out of the New-road in the name of Mordaunt, and sent forth his advertisements which, as usual, were of the most tempting character.

Joseph, whose latent object was to cause both Tynte and George to be transported, conceiving their utter destruction to be essential to his own security, now commenced action. He had been, ever since the reward was offered for information on the subject of the register, constantly tortured by Tynte, whose threatening demands swelled beyond the power of supply; but when the affidavits had been made, and he knew what important information had been obtained, he saw that in accomplishing the object he had in view, no time was to be lost.

He therefore, immediately after Tynte's advertisements appeared, having made himself acquainted with the whole of the circumstances connected with George's marriage, as well as with the fact that Sir Richard was sinking, in a pecuniary sense, beneath the weight of his accumulated misfortunes, requested a friend of his who lived near Sir Richard, and knew him well, to place one of these advertisements in an apparently casual manner before him.

This was done; and the effect was precisely that which Joseph had anticipated. Sir Richard had many engagements to meet, and feeling that time alone could save him, he answered the advertisement, and after some slight correspondence, in which Tynte succeeded in convincing him that Mordaunt was a man of high respectability, an interview was appointed, of which the result was, that Tynte on producing ten bill-stamps, induced Sir Richard to accept in blank, promising to remit him the amount on the following Saturday, after deducting interest at the rate of ten per cent per annum.

Having obtained these blank acceptances, Tynte returned to town; but as he immediately afterwards discovered that although the stamps were written across, and made payable at one of the London bankers,

Sir Richard had omitted to sign his name—a fact which, in his anxiety to obtain possession of them, Tynte had overlooked, and was ready to cut his throat in consequence—he wrote to him apprising him of the omission, and requesting to know when it would be convenient for him to complete the acceptances which, without his name, were utterly valueless of course.

Tynte's object in writing on this occasion was, to ascertain before he went down, whether anything like suspicion had been excited in the interim; but as the reply of Sir Richard convinced him that no doubt of the correctness of the transaction was entertained, he met him by appointment at the place of their first meeting, five miles from Sir Richard's residence, where the omission was promptly supplied.

It had been agreed between them that the bills should be drawn at six, nine, twelve, fifteen, and eighteen months, but when Tynte returned with them to town, he caused the whole of them to be filled up for five hundred pounds each, at *two* months, dating them all on the same day, in order that if spoken of, they might appear to be one and the same bill. He then left his new apartments, of course, dropped the name of Mordaunt, and directed the whole of his attention to the process of turning the bills into cash.

Joseph, who had been watching the progress of his scheme with unbounded satisfaction, now informed him of the fact, of which he was previously ignorant, of Sir Richard being the father-in-law of George; and at the same time suggested that if two or three of the bills were to be taken to him for discount, he would do them without hesitation, as a means of effecting a reconciliation between the old knight and his daughter.

This appeared to Tynte to be a most excellent suggestion: he felt that he might thus get rid of two of them at least without making much of a sacrifice; and having thought of Cavendish, he went to him, and stated that two bills had just been placed in his hands for discount, and that as the acceptor was the father-in-law of Julian, he would, in all probability, give cash for them at once.

Cavendish, aware of the feeling which existed between Tynte and George, at once offered to conduct the negociation, provided he were paid ten per cent on the amount. These terms were considered by Tynte rather high, but as he eventually agreed to them, Cavendish took the bills, and went direct to George's office, although he scarcely expected to find him there; but as this happened to be the day after the last visit to the curate, when George had made arrangements for remaining a short time in town, he was fortunate enough to meet him at the office-door.

"Ah! Mr. Julian!" he exclaimed, with his usual display of affectionate warmth. "Proud to see you! Haven't set eyes on you for a variety of generations. Never call! Rich—artful—wealthy—doing the trick — eh? Well!—oh! by the bye," he added, pulling George in, "I've a couple of bills here. I don't know the parties, but I'm told they're as safe as the bank. They want me to do them, but I can't. Tin's all locked up—every sixpence. Let me see, I think I've got them

about me! I know I had them!—how strange! I *thought* I put them into my pocket-book—oh! *here* they are! I *thought*—no they're not—there's only one. But that'll do. Do you know any thing of them?"

George looked at the acceptance, and started. Even before he had time to read the name, he knew the hand—"*Accepted: payable at Messrs Praeds. Richard Roughall.*"

"I hear," continued Cavendish, pretending not to notice the surprise manifested by George—"I hear the acceptor is as regular as the sun; but I know nothing of him—do you?"

"I've heard of him," replied George, carelessly.

"Well, then, you may as well *do* them. I'd do them myself, but I'm stumped"

"Is the other accepted by the same man?"

"I believe so. Oh! here is the other."

"The same date and the same sum," said George, having examined it. "That's very strange. Why couldn't he have given one bill for the whole amount?"

"It was probably done to facilitate the negociation."

"Very likely. Well, I'll do them. Do you want the money to-day?"

"I believe that the drawer is anxious to have it as soon as possible."

"Do you know the drawer?"

"No; they were put into my hands in the regular course of business. I know nothing of either the drawer or the acceptor. The person of whom I received it says he can stand seven and a half per cent on the transaction, so that if you have five, and I take two and half, you know, it'll answer the purpose of all concerned."

"Well," said George, "knowing something of the acceptor, if you'll call in an hour I'll give you the cash."

"Very well. Then I'll look in again in an hour. By the bye, have you ever heard of that fellow Peter?"

"Oh, yes! I've heard of him."

"Ah!—Well!—Scamp!—No matter!—Gratitude's dead and defunct in the human heart of man. Let me see—it's now twelve. I'll look in again at one. Adieu!—ta, ta,—I'll not detain you. To a man of your talent time's money.—Adieu!"

"What *could* he have given these bills for?" said George to himself musing, when Cavendish had left. "He has perhaps entered into some new speculation.—Not unlikely! I'll hold them at all events. They may be the means of bringing about a somewhat better understanding between us. It is strange—very strange, they should have fallen into *my* hands!"

And it would have appeared strange to most men, and most men, moreover, in his position would have been equally glad; but his gladness did not partake of any feeling of triumph: it could not; for having heard nothing of Sir Richard's misfortunes, he of course still believed him to be a wealthy man.

Punctually at one o'clock Cavendish returned, and George having

in the interim made the necessary arrangements, gave him a cheque for the amount. This to the feelings of Mr. Cavendish was highly satisfactory, and of course he immediately got the cheque cashed; not that he entertained the slightest doubt of its being paid when presented, but simply because he had a natural disinclination to let Tynte see it, as he intended to charge double the amount of interest that had been taken by George, independently of the ten per cent. for which he stipulated. Tynte was, notwithstanding, well content; and having informed Mr. Cavendish that he had other bills of the same man's acceptance which he might as well try to get discounted through the same channel in the morning, he called upon Joseph Broadbridge, to whom he explained that the application to George had been successful, and who of course was extremely delighted. He felt that the game was now his own—that he had but to pursue it from that point with promptitude and tact to render failure impossible—and being still determined to lose no time, he wrote to Sir William by that night's post, to inform him that he would do himself the pleasure of waiting upon him, although a stranger, on the following day, to communicate something of great importance in connexion with certain bills which had got into the hands of disreputable people.

By the same post Tynte sent a letter stating that his want of punctuality had arisen in consequence of money being "terribly short" just then, intimating that the dividends would be paid in a few days, when of course it would be more plentiful, and assuring him that he was using his best exertions to turn the bills into cash, which as far as that went was particularly true.

On receiving these letters, Sir Richard began to feel alarmed, for it was then for the first time that he reflected on the folly, not only of accepting in blank, but of entrusting his acceptances to an absolute stranger, of whose respectability he possessed no other proof than that which the man's own letters afforded. How he could have been such an idiot, he professed himself unable to conceive; and yet who could have supposed that a person of Mordaunt's refined manners, appearance, and candour, was not a respectable man!

Endeavouring thus to find some excuse for his folly, he waited the arrival of his correspondent Broadbridge, in a state of the most galling suspense; but punctually at the appointed hour, a post-chaise stopped at the gate, and as Joseph alighted, Sir Richard hastened across the lawn to receive him.

The chaise was then dismissed, and they entered the house, when, as Sir Richard was naturally anxious to know all, they proceeded to business at once.

"Now, in the first place," said Joseph, on opening the conversation, "you, as a man of the world, will expect me to explain why I thus take an interest in an affair with which I am totally unconnected; but whether you expect it or not, I deem it necessary to give this explanation, in order that the motive by which I am actuated may be perfectly understood. There is," he continued, "in London a person who has obtained among a certain class of speculative men, the *sobriquet* of the

Prince; but he is, in my view, the Prince only of ingenious knaves. Of that, however, I'll leave you to form your own judgment. It will be sufficient for me to state, that the greatest swindlers on town are his associates, and what the character of a man is whom *they* called the Prince, may be readily inferred. Well; this person, this 'Prince,' has got hold of a cousin of mine, an inexperienced young man, who has some expectations; and when I state my conviction that he has got him in his toils expressly in order to plunder him of the property to which he may become entitled, you will at once perceive the cause of my anxiety to check his atrocious career."

"Oh! I see—I see perfectly. Oh! I perceive."

"Very well. Now, Sir Richard, you have certain bills out to a considerable amount?"

"I have: I gave them the other day to a person named Mordaunt."

"That name was assumed. You have of course received no consideration for those bills?"

"Not a shilling."

"Nor will you ever receive a shilling, Sir Richard. You are the victim of a deeply laid scheme—a foul conspiracy! You have got into the hands of a gang of swindlers who are determined to ruin you if possible, and the leader of that gang is this Prince!"

"Who is he? What's his name?"

"George St. George Julian."

"Julian!" echoed Sir Richard; "George St. George Julian!"

"Do you know him?"

"Know him! I'll hang him!"

"Your knowledge of him probably accounts for his malignity and that of his gang, for you are evidently the object of their especial hatred."

"The villain!" groaned Sir Richard, clenching his fists and grinding his teeth with uncontrolable rage. "I see it all!—all! I'll torture him! I know where he is to be found! I'll go up this very night! If any thing can enable me to bear up against the accumulated losses I have sustained, it will be the bright prospect of seeing that villain hanging by the neck like a dog! You are *sure*—but *I* am sure—the thing is too plain to admit of a doubt; but can I have *proof*—sufficient *proof* to convict him?"

"You can! But allow me to impress this upon you, that in dealing with him you deal with no common man, and that impetuosity must frustrate our object. His ingenuity perhaps surpasses that of every other knave in existence. We must therefore, in order to catch him on the hip, proceed with caution: we must be calm; we must take him by surprise. No notice of this communication must appear until all is prepared, when we can *pounce* upon; and tie him to the stake. He has at this moment two of those bills in his possession, each for five hundred pounds at two months."

"But those are not my bills; I gave no such bills; mine have six, nine, twelve, fifteen, and eighteen months to run!"

"The whole of those bills you accepted in blank, did you not?"

"I did."

"Then the whole of them have been filled up for five hundred each, at *two* months!—and they will all fall due on the same day."

"You amaze me!—But can they recover?"

"Of course they can recover if the bills get into the hands of those who can prove a consideration! Now is the time to strike the blow."

"And that blow shall be struck!"

"Indict them all!—I know them all; and can give all necessary information!"

"I'll indict *him!*—he is my man: I care nothing for the rest."

"But they must all be indicted or you cannot fix *him*. You were robbed of these bills, and he received them, of course knowing them to have been stolen: you must, therefore, indict at least the receiver and the thief, if not the others."

"Who is that scoundrel whom I saw?"

"Oh! he's one of the gang—his name is Tynte. Of course he was led on by Julian. *He's* the prime mover!"

"Of course!—the villain! I'll be in town this night and have the best advice available I care not what I give for it. I'll have it. I'll trounce him. He shall have no mercy. If by any stratagem—by any straining of the law—I can make it a hanging matter, I will"

"You may command all the assistance *I* can render, and as my aid will be most valuable in the event of my keeping in the back-ground—seeing that I can then watch the movements of the enemy without exciting suspicion—I had better not appear in the matter at all."

"Exactly. I understand. *We'll* manage it! We'll dine, and then start off at once."

An order was then given for dinner to be brought up at once, and Sir Richard began to explain how peculiarly hard it was to be pounced upon just at the very time that ruin stared him in the face. Upon this theme of course the virtuous Joseph improved. It was one of his grand points!—his great immediate object was to induce the belief that George, knowing what heavy losses Sir Richard had sustained, had embraced what he conceived to be a fine opportunity for completing his ruin, and as Sir Richard most firmly believed it to be the fact, his immaculate friend was comparatively happy,

Having dined, Sir Richard sent one of his servants to order a post-chaise, and when they had drank a couple of bottles of wine between them, they started for town, inspired with the spirit of vengeance, and perfectly fit for each other's society.

In the meantime George had been applied to by Cavendish, to discount two more of the bills, but as he naturally thought it strange that four bills should be drawn for the same amount and on the same day, he hesitated: still, being anxious to possess them all if all were correct, he told Cavendish—that being Saturday, to call on the Monday, when he would let him know whether he could do them or not. Cavendish conceiving that the delay was proposed merely in order to raise the amount, offered to leave the bills with him till the Monday, which he

did; and George having consulted Julia, who was not more surprised than delighted, feeling sure that it would lead to a reconciliation, wrote to Sir Richard by that night's post, to the effect that he had discounted two five-hundred-pound bills,—that two others had been offered, which he should be equally happy to discount, in the event of his being assured of the transaction being correct; and that he was then in a position to raise money to any amount on the bills of Sir Richard, which, on receiving his commands, he should at any time feel great pleasure in doing.

Both George and Julia waited for an answer to this letter with the utmost anxiety; but on the Monday morning no answer came. Believing, however, that an answer would arrive on the Tuesday, he put Cavendish off, and in order that he might have the money ready, he, as a mere matter of convenience, got Bull to pay into *his* banker's the two first bills, that he might have a cheque for the amount when required.

Tuesday came, but with it no answer from Sir Richard: Wednesday's post came in, still no answer was returned; but in the course of that day Bull received a communication from his banker's to the effect that they desired to see him as soon as possible on business of importance. On receiving this communication, Bull wondering what on earth it could mean, went at once; when they informed him that they had just been advised that the two bills which he had paid in, and which had been placed to his account as cash, were bills of which with others Sir Richard had been defrauded, and requested to know the name of the person from whom he received them, and the circumstances under which they came into his hands.

Bull, of course, gave the name of George instantly, as the person from whom he received the bills, and by whom they had in fact been endorsed, and at the same time expressed his entire conviction that George was utterly ignorant of the fact of their having been improperly obtained. Into that question the bankers of course had no wish to enter: all they desired to know was the name of the party that paid them to Bull, with the circumstances under which they were received; and as they were satisfied with the explanation offered, Bull left, and immediately called upon George.

"My dear boy," said he, as he entered in a state of alarm, "I have dreadful news, I have; most horrible! Where did you get those bills from, my dear boy?—Where did you get those bills from?"

"Why, what's the matter?"

"We are ruined!—we are utterly ruined! Who gave them to you?—whom did you do them for?"

"Cavendish: he brought them to *me*," replied George; "is there anything wrong?"

"Everything's wrong! Those bills, my dear boy, have been stolen?"

"Stolen!" exclaimed George. "By whom?"

"I don't know—I didn't ask—I didn't think of asking. When I heard of it you might have knocked me down with a pen. But those

two are not all; many others have been stolen!—a quantity!—a lot! —I don't know *how* many."

"*I* have two more!"

"You have! My dear boy, you alarm me! I'm fit to sink into the earth."

"I've not done them, nor did I mean to do them until I heard from Sir Richard in reply to my letter."

"Then you have written to him?"

"I wrote to inform him that I had discounted two; and that I would discount the others with pleasure on receiving his assurance that all was correct."

"That's a comfort, as far as it goes; but it's a dreadful thing for you, it is, dreadful."

"It's a bad job as far as the money is concerned, for I shall doubtless experience some difficulty in getting it back; but as regards my possession of the bills, I can of course sufficiently prove the transaction to have been on my part perfectly regular and straightforward."

"I know it!—I know it! I said so, I did. But what a position it places you in! what a position it places us both in!"

"Don't be alarmed. I had better walk with you to the banker's, and hear more about this unfortunate business."

"Yes, do; and that will partly exonerate me. We'll go at once, we will. Yes, that'll be best."

George then left instructions for Cavendish to be detained in the event of his calling during their absence, and they proceeded direct to the banker's in question, and had an interview with one of the firm.

At this interview all was explained, and the account which George gave of the manner in which he had become possessed of the bills appeared to be quite satisfactory to the banker, who gave him the address of Mr. Bounsom, Sir Richard's solicitor in town, upon whom George resolved at once to call.

Conceiving however that Cavendish, whom he expected to call for the amount of the bills which he had left, might be waiting, they in the first place went round to the office, and fortunately found Mr. Cavendish there."

"Ah!" he exclaimed as they entered, "my two dear friends! Proud to see you both looking so well."

"Mr. Cavendish," said George, "how did those bills of Sir Richard come into your hands?"

"Oh! in the regular way of business."

"But from whom did you receive them?"

"Why I don't exactly know that I'm at liberty to say; but that, I suppose, is of no importance?"

"Yes, it is of importance," replied George, earnestly. "I am anxious to put you on your guard. It is absolutely necessary that you should state his name at once: it is, in fact, essential to your own safety."

"My safety!—why—what in the name of all that's—what's it all about?"

"Those bills have been stolen."

"Stolen?—stolen?—is it possible?"

"The information I have just received, places the matter beyond doubt. *My* possession of them, of course, can be easily accounted for: it rests now with you to explain how they came into your hands."

"O, I could explain if I were at liberty to do so."

"At *liberty* to do so! If the man from whom you received them be respectable, what objection can either he or you possibly have to his name being mentioned?"

"Why, you see I don't like to involve any man."

"Well: the matter rests with you entirely now!"—all I have to state is that I received the bills from you."

"Will that be necessary?"

"Necessary! Of course it will be necessary. Do you suppose that I would hesitate for a moment under the circumstances to explain the manner in which they came into my hands?"

"Well, I must see about it! The other bills—the two which I left with you—I'd better take back to him, I suppose."

"No, those I shall keep until the matter is settled, and of course I expect the amount of my cheque to be returned."

"But I gave the money to him!"

"Then you must look to him for it. I look only to you."

"Well, if I get it, why of course it is yours!"

"Whether you get it or not, *I* must have it. Let that be distinctly understood."

"Well!—well!—we must see about the business. But will it come to any thing, think you?"

"It will be rather a serious affair for those concerned, you may depend upon that. I know Sir Richard too well to doubt for a moment that he will have his full measure of vengeance. But I'm now going up to his solicitor in order to ascertain how the case stands.

"Well, but you need not, you know, mention my name more often than occasion requires!"

"I certainly shall not; but if occasion should require me to mention it fifty times, I of course should not hesitate to do so."

"But now don't you really think, Mr. Cavendish," said Bull, "that you had better at once give up the name of this party.?"

"It's my policy," replied Cavendish, "and I think it a politic policy to get no friend into a scrape if I can help it. I must go and see about it. If the party himself has no objection I'll return and let you know with all the pleasure in nature."

He then took his leave, and George, accompanied by Bull, went to call upon Bounsom, Sir Richard's attorney.

Mr. Bounsom was within, and as a pleasant-looking man he could not with any truth be described; nor were his manners in the slightest degree enchanting, and therefore neither George nor Bull can be said to have been at all prepossessed in his favour. As they entered the office he scowled at them as viciously as if he intended to wither their nerves, but as George was not a man to be disconcerted by a scowl, he looked

and spoke as firmly as if Mr. Bounsom had been one of the most agreeable men alive.

"My name is Julian," said he.

"I know it!" growled forth Mr. Bounsom with remarkable promptitude and power. "What do you want here?"

"Why," replied George, with something bearing the semblance of a sardonic smile, "I *want* information respecting certain bills, some of which have unfortunately passed through my hands."

"Oh! information is it you want? Ah! well: you shall have information. I have instructions to proceed by indictment for conspiracy against you and your gang! Do you require any *more* information?"

"My guag?" said George, indignantly; "I don't understand you!"

"Oh! I suppose not. You are a nice young man, I dare say—innocent, doubtless, as a dove."

"He's a highly-*respectable* young man, sir, I'll answer for that!" cried Bull, who felt very indignant indeed.

"You know better," rejoined Bounsom. "But who are you? *one* of the gang?"

"What do you mean, sir!" cried Bull, who began to get furious. "How dare you associate the epithet gang with me? Here's my card, sir! Look at that!"

"Well, that may be useful," said Bounsom. "You may be wanted with the rest, and when you are, why we shall know where to find you."

"Let me tell you, sir—"

"Be calm," said George, "it is useless to be otherwise than calm."

"But who *can* be calm?"

"I can! although accused of being connected with a *gang!*"

"Yes, it's all very well Mr. George St. George Julian," said Bounsam, sarcastically; "but you see, Mr. George St. George Julian, your virtues are known."

"I am happy to hear it," said George. "*Your* virtues, I presume, are not quite so conspicuous."

"I tell you what it is, young man," cried Bounsom, upon whose reputation such a variety of raw places had been established, that he really could scarcely bear to be touched at all "If you expect mercy you must assume a very different tone, and I've this to say that if you *hope* to be mercifully dealt with you'll bring me the whole of those bills by eleven o'clock to-morrow morning. I'll not wait till twelve! —understand that!—on or before eleven o'clock if the whole of the bills, the ten bills be returned, why I may hold out hopes of such mercy as may be consistent with justice; but if they be *not* forthcoming at that hour—"

"Psha!" exclaimed George. "Why I hold you your justice and your mercy alike in contempt. *Mercy!* You must be insane."

"Then you *defy* us?"

"Defy you! Of course I defy you! You talk like a madman."

"Oh! that's enough!—that's quite enough!—I don't want to hear another word. Mr. George St. George Julian the *Prince*, we shall soon meet again."

George smiled with contempt as he rose to depart, but Bull would not leave the office until he had explained that he was at least as respectable a man as Mr. Bounsom, and that moreover he was *not* and never had been connected with any *gang!*

"Did you ever hear tell of such insolence?" said he, having got fairly out of the office. "I *never* was so insulted before in all my life."

"It was scarcely worth noticing," replied George. "You see what he is. But what did he mean by calling me the Prince?"

"Oh I've heard the term applied to you frequently. I believe the application owes its origin to me. I think I called you the prince of speculators soon after that unfortunate quicksilver affair."

"Well! perhaps I ought to feel honoured, but that fellow clearly imagines me to be the prince of swindlers, the leader of a *gang*, and if that should obtain notoriety, why, the *honour* is of a rather equivocal caste.'

"Oh, but he cannot imagine that!"

"It is quite clear to me that that is what he does imagine. However, it cannot be helped. I must be on my guard. It is perfectly obvious that that man means mischief."

"But what can he do to *you?* Your case is quite clear!—you had no hand in obtaining these bills!—you knew nothing of the manner in which they were obtained!—they can't do any thing to you, they can't!"

"Yes, they can seriously annoy me. They can fix upon me that appellation, which I may never be able to get rid of. They can charge me with being connected with the parties by whom these bills were obtained; they can include me in the indictment for conspiracy: they can even include you."

"Include me!—me in an indictment for conspiracy!"

"We are speaking now only of what they *can* do; what they will do remains to be seen. If a man be once charged with the commission of crime, no matter how clearly he may be able to establish his innocence, the accusation sticks to him for life."

"You alarm me, you do!"

"Oh! *you* are quite safe."

"And I think that you are!"

"Well! I may be. It certainly is a most unfortunate affair, but we must hope for the best."

Bull *did* hope for the best, but at the same time he could not help fearing the worst. The bare idea of being included in an indictment set his mind on the rack, and he went home wretched.

George, knowing that Julia would be in agony if she were informed of the circumstance, made up his mind to conceal it from her at least until the affair had in some way been settled; but on the following morning while at breakfast, Helen's eye rested upon an advertisement

in the *Times* as that paper was lying on the table, offering a reward for the apprehension of "George St. George Julian, *alias* the Prince, Augustus Alexander Cavendish, and Horatio Oswald Tynte, *alias* Robert Mordaunt."

"What on earth is this!" she exclaimed in tones which startled both Julia and George. "Here's a reward offered for your apprehension, and that of—oh!—pray look!"

George, although he felt of course deeply mortified, smiled as he read it, while Helen and Julia fixed their eyes upon him in a state of almost breathless suspense.

"Well," said he, throwing the paper down with an expression of contempt, "that's one way of annoying a man, certainly!"

"What is it, dear!" cried Julia. "Pray tell me what it is."

"You may perceive that it has been done but to annoy me. If my apprehension were their object, they would not resort to those means, my dear, you may depend upon that, for I am always to be found. No, they thought that it would vex me to have my name published in connection with those persons, that's all."

"Well, if it be nothing more—and yet *that* is very dreadful, what right have they to do it, I wonder; they ought to be punished! It might do you a very serious injury! Do you know who they are?"

"I can guess pretty nearly. *I'll* see after the gentleman in the course of the day."

"Such a thing as that is really unpardonable! isn't it, dear?"

Hellen, to whom this was addressed, was at the time too much occupied with her own thoughts to notice the fact of her having been appealed to. The name of Tynte had caused the recollection of her marriage, and all the circumstances connected with it to come full upon her, and she sat in silence which, as far as she was concerned, was broken only by an occasional sigh.

Immediately after breakfast, George called upon the attorney with the view of expostulating with him on the subject; but while he was looked upon as a felon, and treated with utter scorn, the only answer he could get was that the Prince was not wanted just then, but that he would be shortly. George of course was highly indignant, and set forth the baseness of such proceedings with great warmth; but finding that he might as well speak to a post, he left, declaring that the matter should not rest there.

While George was with Bounsom, Tynte, whom the advertisement had not escaped, was with his friend, Joseph Broadbridge. He had called to demand an immediate explanation, and as he strongly suspected him of treachery, the terms on which that demand was made were appalling. In vain Joseph declared that he was a stranger to the whole proceedings; in vain he endeavoured to assure him that he was ignorant of the manner in which his real name had been discovered; Tynte would not believe it!—he seized him by the throat, and almost strangled him!—nay, as he pinned him to the ground with one knee

upon his chest, he threatened to murder him if he still refused to make a full confession.

A full confession, however, Joseph would *not* make. He still declared that he had never divulged the secret, that he had never even thought of giving up Tynte's name, that he was ignorant of the way in which the information had been obtained, and that his only object was to involve George; and when Tynte at length permitted him to rise, he dwelt upon these points with so much earnestness and tact, that he eventually succeeded in convincing him that George had denounced him in order to save himself.

This caused Tynte's hatred of George to be far more violent than ever, and when Joseph suggested to him that George would be in all probability compelled to pay the amount of the whole of the bills in full in order that proceedings might be stayed, the prospect of a result so ruinous inspired him with ecstasy.

"But," said he, remembering the danger of his own position, "what am I to do in the interim? I'm not for a moment safe! where am I to go until this result has been achieved?"

"Remain here," replied Joseph. "To prove how much disposed I am to render you all possible service, I'll undertake to shield you effectually, and to supply you with all that you may require. They'll never of course, dream of coming here to look for you. It is impossible for you to be in a place of greater safety."

Tynte—who was of course unconscious of Joseph's only object being to secure him when the proper time arrived—at once accepted this offer, and there he took up his abode, when Joseph embraced the earliest opportunity of informing Sir Richard of the fact, and in the course of the day they went to Bow-street for warrants against bothTynte and George.

The magistrates, however, refused to entertain the charge; when, accompanied by their attorney, they proceeded to the Mansion House, and applied to the Lord Mayor, and as this application was equally unsuccessful, Joseph began to feel dreadfully alarmed, while the rage of Sir Richard was unbounded.

The Middlesex Sessions were at hand, and as they saw that the matter must not be delayed, Bounsom was instructed to prepare an indictment, while Joseph undertook to procure sufficient evidence to go before the Grand Jury. This task was accomplished with the utmost ease; as perjury finds an invulnerable panoply in the Grand Jury-room, there could of course be no difficulty at all about that. He knew where to pick some "capital swearers," and these he secured; and when they had been duly crammed and trained by the respectable Mr. Bounsom, and his equally respectable clerk, nothing more was required to obtain a "True Bill."

Secrecy during the whole of these preliminary proceedings had been held to be essential to success; but to George, notwithstanding, the whole of their movements, were known. He was constantly on the alert; he knew that their first great object was to take him by surprise,

and when he received information of his having been actually included in an indictment, he saw clearly how it would be.

Accordingly on the first day of the Sessions he, accompanied by Bull, went to the Court House, on Clerkenwell Green, to enquire of the clerk of the Peace whether any "True Bill" had been found against Julian, Tynte, Cavendish, and others; and as the clerk was not then in a position to inform him, he was requested to call again in an hour. His object in taking this step was to ascertain the fact as early as possible, in order that by going before a magistrate with his sureties at once, he might avoid the inconvenience of remaining in custody forty-eight hours after the notice of bail had been given. In an hour he therefore returned, and on passing through the entrance of the hall he saw Sir Richard, Bounsom, and two other persons in earnest conversation. Sir Richard caught sight of him as he passed, and scowled at him furiously; but George, without appearing to notice him, entered the office with Bull.

They had scarcely however been there two minutes, when Sir Richard and an officer entered; and while George was obtaining the information he required, the officer approached, and gently touching him upon the shoulder, said—"you are my prisoner."

"On what charge?" demanded George.

"Forgery," coolly replied the officer.

"Forgery!" echoed George, with an expression of the most intense astonishment.—"Forgery!" He was thunderstruck! and turned from the officer to Sir Richard, who met his stare with a fiend-like smile of satisfaction, while Bull seemed utterly paralyzed.—"Forgery!" he reiterated—"Impossible!—Oh! there must be some mistake!"

"*No!*"—cried Sir Richard, grinding his teeth at him—"No!—there is *no* mistake!—Forgery is the charge!"

Expostulation was useless: all information was refused: he was hurried off to Bow-street to meet the charge, and there he remained until the magistrates attended in the evening.

The charge of forgery was but a *ruse*. It was preferred merely in order to secure him. The "True Bill" had not then been found, but as it was "found" in the course of the day, they moved the Court for a warrant, and got the amount of bail fixed with eight-and-forty hours' notice. When, therefore, they attended before the magistrates in the evening, they jeeringly refused to go into the charge of forgery—no! *that* was not their object!—their object in making that charge had been attained!—and George was immediately committed to the new prison, Clerkenwell, until the notice of bail had expired, on the indictment.

CHAPTER XXV.

RELATES THE ADVENTURES OF A DAY

THE curate and his daughter arrived at George's residence that very evening, and were received most warmly by Julia and Helen, who were really delighted to see them.

"Oh! I'm so *glad* that you are come!" exclaimed Julia. "George will be home presently: I expect him every moment."

"He is well, I hope?" inquired the curate.

"Oh quite!—he enjoys excellent health, and is in such spirits!—He will be *so* pleased to find you here!"

"The pleasure will be mutual," said the curate, "for I believe him to be an excellent young man."

Julia bowed, and leaving Helen to entertain him, retired with Lydia, who scarcely uttered an irrational sentence, although the change of scene had evidently been productive of some excitement.

While they were engaged in promoting the growth of that affection for each other, which had taken deep root at their first meeting, Fred arrived with a note from George, of which the contents were to the effect, that he had been most unexpectedly summoned on highly important business, which would in all probability detain him two days. Fred, of course, knew the purport of this note: he had just come from George, to whom he had given a solemn promise that he would not utter a syllable, having reference to the real state of the case, and when he delivered it to Julia, he did so with a preface which was strictly in accordance with its contents.

"Oh dear how very tiresome!" cried Julia, having read this note, which was written in a deeply affectionate strain. "Dear me how unfortunate! Oh! this business!—this business."

She then handed the note to the Curate, and cross-examined Fred on the subject, and when a variety of analagous cases had been given with the view of illustrating that indisputable fact, that "business must be attended to" they wisely settled down for the evening with the full determination to enjoy to the utmost each other's society.

Helen, however, who had never ceased to think of the advertisement, suspected that all was not right. She could not understand—nay, she could not conceive, why such an advertisement as that should appear; and when she reflected upon the character of Tynte in connection with the fact of George's name being publicly associated with his, her mind was filled with apprehensions: she indeed felt convinced that something dreadful had occurred, and although she neither communicated her suspicions to Julia, nor appeared to be less gay than usual, she was throughout the evening in reality wretched.

In the morning, when all were assembled at breakfast, Julia proposed a walk, and solicited Fred, who had been specially invited, to accompany them; but as he had promised to call upon George, he endea-

voured to excuse himself on the ground of having an appointment, stating, of course, that he should otherwise have felt most happy.

But Julia was not disposed to receive this excuse.

"What tiresome creatures you men of business are, to be sure!" she exclaimed, "you are perpetually engaged. But *is* this appointment now really imperative?"

"*Indeed* it is," replied Fred; "but I shall probably not be detained five minutes."

"Have you far to go?"

"Yes, some considerable distance."

"Well, we must endeavour during that five minutes to spare you. We can accompany you there of course, and then you can rejoin us. If even anything should occur to detain you, we shall have the protection of at least one gentleman! Can we not manage it in that way?"

Fred was *afraid* to offer any opposition. He therefore acceded to the proposal at once, regretting the circumstance of his having made the appointment, and promising to be absent but a very short time.

Now during the interval which occurred between the time this arrangement was made and that at which they were ready to start, Tynte had his suspicions of Joseph's treachery re-awakened by the appearance of Sir Richard. He was at the time at the window of one of the rooms which he occupied, and saw the knight, whom he recognised instantly, making for the house. He therefore armed himself with the poker—the only weapon at hand—and resolving not to be captured without at least making a desperate effort to escape, took his station upon the stairs, ready to knock down the very first man who might venture to approach.

These precautions were, however, unnecessary. The object of Sir Richard was not to capture him. He had called merely in order to consult his friend Joseph on the expediency of abandoning the indictment for conspiracy, and taking another step which his attorney had suggested, and of which the result, if successful, would be far more serious to George, whose destruction *alone* he sought to compass. Still Tynte kept on guard, nor would he relinquish his post for an instant until Sir Richard had quitted the house, when he went down to Joseph, inspired with the spirit of vengeance, poker in hand.

"Now," said he firmly, "the time has arrived for us to come to a settlement, take your seat in that chair!"

Joseph hesitated, feeling exceedingly alarmed.

"Sit *down!*" shouted Tynte, striking the table with the poker, and splitting it completely across, "instantly! or you measure your length on the floor."

Joseph trembled, but sat down, and when he had done so, Tynte took a seat immediately opposite, with the head of the poker resting upon his knee.

"Now! Who was that?" he demanded with a most ferocious aspect.

"Oh!" replied Joseph, very tremulously, "that! Oh! that was Sir Richard Roughall!"

"I know it! And *so* you have betrayed me."

"No, no! On my honour!"

"Your *honour!* Treacherous villain!"

"Indeed! If you'll believe me!"

"I will not believe you."

"I have not—I have not indeed!"

"You have *not!* Then how came he here?"

"He called to speak about Julian! indeed, nothing more!"

"But how came he to call upon you?—*you* who are so perfect a stranger to his proceedings—so utterly ignorant of the manner in which he means to act?"

"I don't know—I don't indeed—I really don't know. I suppose he heard that I had some knowledge of Julian—I presume that that is the reason why he called."

"I don't believe a single word of it! You know each other well! He and you have been concocting some scheme for my destruction."

"No! *indeed* we have not!"

"I know you have! I'm sure of it!"

"If you'll *not* believe me, when I tell you that your name was never mentioned, what *am* I to do?"

"Speak the truth!"

"I *do* speak the truth!"

"It is false! You know every word of it to be false! I'll not murder you now," he added with an intensity of expression quite appalling. "But I *could* do it!"

"Murder me!"

"Aye! But I'll first prove your treachery beyond all doubt. If I find that you *have* sold, or even *mean* to sell me in any way, you're a dead man. And now let me know how he has proceeded against Julian. What step has he taken?"

"I believe he has indicted him."

"Believe! You know that he has! And for what?"

"I believe for conspiracy."

"With whom? Am I included in that indictment?"

"Oh no, I should say not—certainly not, I should think."

"I'll be satisfied on that point at once."

"You'd better not leave the house! You may be taken!"

"Then you know that I *am* included?"

"Upon my word, I do not. But you'll remember he has offered a reward for your apprehension!"

"I'll take my chance of that. I *will* be satisfied; and if I should find that I *am* in the indictment—"

"You'll say that is my fault, no doubt, although I've had no more to do with it than the child unborn."

"That I'll ascertain."

"But be advised! Let me prevail upon you not to run the risk. Let *me* go!"

"No: I'll not trust you. I'll go myself."

Whereupon he left the house to the bitter mortification of Joseph, who in an hour from that time would have had him secured.

After a most agreeable walk, during which a variety of scenes occurred to excite the curate's astonishment, Julia and her party reached Clerkenwell-green, and as Fred was of course anxious to enter the prison unperceived, he led them past the church towards "Hicks's Hall," at the entrance of which many persons were standing.

As this scene appeared to excite their curiosity, they crossed, but they had no sooner done so than the curate, who was behind Fred, Julia, and Helen, rushed past them exclaiming, "There he is! There he is! That bad man! There, there he is!" and seizing a person who had just left the Hall by the throat, held him firmly against the lamp-post.

Lydia flew towards her father to restrain him, while Helen shrieked and almost fainted.

It was Tynte! and Fred no sooner heard his name uttered, than for more than one reason he disengaged his arms with the view of securing the wretch; but before he could reach him he broke from the curate's grasp, and flew round the corner in an instant. Fred pursued him, and he dashed down a thickly-inhabited hole called Mutton-hill, knocking down every person and every thing which stood in his way. Fred still followed, shouting to the persons ahead to stop him, but he dashed past them all, and on reaching the opposite verge of the hole, turned to the left towards Field-lane, and in an instant disappeared!

Fred was now at fault. No spectre could have vanished with greater facility. He had evidently darted into one of the houses; but which? The whole of the doors were open, and Fred made inquiries at several; but no: they had seen no such person—of course! they knew nothing whatever about him; when Fred having lost all scent without the most remote prospect of finding it again there, retraced his steps panting with somewhat more energy than pleasure.

On returning to the point from which he had started, he found the curate most earnestly engaged in explaining to the multitude—by whom he and the ladies were surrounded—the whole of the circumstances connected with the case. He was highly excited, and trembled with violence, but Fred of course soon put a stop to the harangue; albeit the curate still deemed it incumbent upon him—with a view to his own justification—to put the mob in possession of the whole of the facts.

Having escaped from the crowd, Fred, finding that the ladies were exceedingly nervous and faint, proposed to enter, that which appeared to be the only respectable tavern on the green, and as this proposition, under the circumstances seemed to meet their views, he at once led them towards it.

They had, however, scarcely reached the door, when Fred met his cousin, in company with one to whom Julia, on the instant flew, exclaiming, "My father!"

Joseph passed on, and Sir Richard would have followed his example, but Julia clung to him so firmly, that although he made several violent efforts to shake her off, he was utterly unable to do so.

"Father!" she exclaimed in a tone which thrilled through every heart save that which ought to have felt it most accutely, "Dear father!—hear me!—pray hear me!—but for a moment!"

"Stand off!" cried Sir Richard, as he struggled to disengage himself, "Away!"

"Oh! forgive me, dear father!—forgive me!"

"Never!" he exclaimed, and throwing her violently from him, turned away as Fred caught her in his arms.

"My dear sir!" cried the curate, closely following Sir Richard, as Fred bore Julia into the tavern, "My dear sir!—But one word!—You are a Christian!—My dear sir!"—

"Mind your own business!" shouted Sir Richard fiercely, as he continued to walk after Joseph.

"But my dear sir!—Allow me!—As you hope to be forgiven!—"

"Be off!"

"But as you are a Christian—"

"Oh! don't bother me!"

"But my dear sir!" continued the curate, still following him zealously up. "Bnt one moment!—I myself am a father—"

"Haven't I told you to be off! What do you want?—Do you want to pick my pocket?"

The curate was dumb, and having stood as if fixed to the earth, looking after Sir Richard until he was quite lost to view, he sincerely hoped that heaven would forgive him, and returned to the tavern amazed.

Julia was for some time insensible: the shock she had received was indeed most severe, and when, by virtue of restoratives, consciousness returned, she felt perhaps more deeply wounded than at first. Helen too suffered acutely, and while Lydia appeared to be lost in wonder, the curate seemed to look upon it all as a dream.

"I wish that I had had sufficient strength," he observed, when he had taken two glasses of sherry, "I would certainly have held him until I had given him into the custody of some constable."

"What, Tynte you mean?" observed Fred.

"No, I don't mean Tynte, although I must say *he* behaved very ill when he asked me if I wanted to pick his pocket—forsooth!—I mean Richardson."

"Aye! the man whom you seized?"

"Exactly."

"Well, that is Tynte. The other is Sir Richard, Mrs. Julian's father."

"Oh! he took me for a pick-pocket. Ah! Well! we are taught to avoid judging from appearances."

"Where is Charles, papa?" inquired Lydia. "Why did you allow him to leave you again?"

"He should not have left, my child, if I could possibly have helped it."

"He ought not to have gone away."

"Nor should he, my dear, had I possessed sufficient strength to detain him. But," he added, addressing Fred confidentially, "what is he?"

Fred held up his hand to enjoin silence, and having intimated to him privately that he would explain all anon, filled his glass, which the curate, without giving the wine a thought, at once emptied.

As the ladies were now comparatively tranquil, Fred reminded them of his appointment, which, during the excitement, they had forgotten altogether, and having explained to them that as it was long passed the hour, the chances were, that he should not be detained beyond a very few minutes, he promised to return as soon as possible, and went through the churchyard to call upon George.

During the whole of the morning, as Fred fully anticipated, George had been in a state of the most painful suspense. He had been utterly unable to imagine why Fred had not come at the hour proposed, and was inclined to be angry with him when he did arrive, for it had very naturally appeared to him to be under the circumstances, cruel neglect.

When, however, Fred had related to him the substance of all that had occurred, he was perfectly satisfied, although the new train of thought which that relation induced, caused Fred to be apprehensive that he was not.

"I assure you, Mr. Julian," said he, while labouring under this misapprehension, "that all I did was for the best, notwithstanding it has proved to be be so singularly unfortunate."

"Unfortunate!" cried George, "not at all! I consider the fact of your having brought them into the neighbourhood, although I certainly should not have advised the step, to be one of the most fortunate things that could possibly have occurred. It has been the means of conveying to me more information than I could have hoped in any other way to obtain, with reference both to your affair and my own. First, with respect to Tynte: we now know that he was the man who removed the name from the register; that he is at once Charles Richardson, and our valuable correspondent O. P. Q.; and then as regards your cousin Joseph, it is now more than ever clear, that he was Tynte's employer, while the fact of your having met him with Sir Richard, plain proves that he is at the bottom of these atrocious proceedings against me. But do you think, Fred, that Julia has the slightest suspicion of anything being wrong?"

"I am sure that she has not."

"Thank Heaven! And she recovered you say before you left!"

"Oh yes; and appeared to be comparatively in good spirits."

"Poor girl! Did he strike her?"

"No; he merely threw her from him."

"The brute! Well, well. Return to them, Fred; don't stop another moment. You need not come here again. No; be with them as much as possible. But I shall keep you all day! There, adieu! God bless you! I shall be home as early as possible to-morrow. Good bye—good bye! For Heaven's sake be on your guard."

Fred then returned to the tavern, and having sent for a coach, the party proceeded immediately home.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN WHICH MR. CAVENDISH IS CRUELLY ILL-USED.

WHILE the curate, after dinner, was explaining, with a variety of amusing illustrations, first, the unexampled tightness with which he had fully made up his mind to hold Tynte the very next time he caught him: secondly, the excessive severity and point with which he intended to retort upon Sir Richard in the event of his again wishing to know if he had any desire to pick a pocket; and contending with logical smartness and effect that while the former was not sufficiently religious, the latter was a most unpleasant christian, George was suddenly aroused from a reverie by a loud laugh which burst from the prisoners in the yard, and which was induced by the introduction of Mr. Cavendish, who strutted in with a superbly pompous air, and looked upon all whom he thereby amused with an expression of the most supreme scorn. He at the time had no knowledge of George being in the prison: he knew of course that his name had been included in the indictment, but had been led to believe that he had left town to avoid being taken into custody: it was therefore with the most lively feelings of satisfaction that he recognised George, who at once approached him, by his side.

"Ah!—What!—Mr. Julian!" he exclaimed, "My dear friend, I am happy to see you: I am indeed very, very happy to see you."

"What here?" cried George.

"You are a man of the world: it may sound strange, it does sound strange, I know it; but you wouldn't believe me were I to say I am not happy to see you now, would you? Selfish perhaps, but as natural as nature for a man to meet with feelings of pleasure a kindred spirit in a place like this. Besides, knowing your talent, I feel more secure!—I don't care so much about it!—But what's to be done?"

"Beg pardon," said one of the prisoners who with mock humility at this moment approached him. "Beg pardon, sir—Garnish, sir?—Regular thing, sir?—Garnish?"

"What do you mean, fellow?" demanded Mr. Cavendish.

"It appears," said George, "to be usual in these places for every new comer to treat those whom he finds."

"Oh! that's it!" rejoined Mr. Cavendish. "And have you the bare-faced audacity," he added, turning to the man with a look of indignation,—and he really was very indignant indeed—"have you, I ask, the unblushing brazen boldness, after having insulted a gentleman, to ask him for money? For your insolence, I'll not stand the ghost of a sixpence!—not the smallest fractional fraction of a copper!"

"You had better give them something," observed George, aside. "They have the power to annoy you while you are here."

"Not a bit of it, Mr. Julian. Do you think I'd suffer myself to be annoyed by such scum? The best way is to treat them with contempt.

I've always found throughout life, sir, that the more you fear men, the more they'll endeavour to *make* you fear them.—You have my answer!" he added aloud. "Had your conduct been correct, I'd have stood something handsome; but as it is, you don't get the apparition of a sou out of me, if I know it!"

Whereupon another loud laugh burst from the prisoners in question, the whole of whom were suddenly seized with a fit of pomp, and thrusting their thumbs into the arm-holes of their waistcoats, after the manner of Mr. Cavendish, blew out their cheeks to the utmost stretch, and strutted about with an air the most majestic they could assume, to the great scandal of their fat fellow-prisoner, who viewed the whole of their bombastic imitations with feelings of ineffable disgust.

Having persuaded Mr. Cavendish to take no further notice of these ungentlemanlike proceedings, George drew him aside, and they began to converse on the subject of the indictment; and when every point having reference to the transaction had been discussed, and George, with his usual candour, had explained clearly the course he intended to pursue, Mr. Cavendish was in raptures, and declared not only that his friendship for him was ardent and pure, but that it should be eternal!

During the whole of the time they were thus conversing, the rest of the prisoners kept aloof; for as George, by his prompt liberality and unassuming manners, had gained their respect, they would not annoy *him* by the slightest interruption; but the moment the conversation ceased, they recommenced operations, and developed all the powers of mimicry they had in them, as well to the annoyance of Mr. Cavendish, as to the amusement of themselves.

Now at that particular period of our history, prison discipline was not quite so rigid as at present; and with reference to this the New Prison, Clerkenwell, it will be necessary to observe, that instead of the prisoners being locked up all night in separate cells, they slept in wards, as in an hospital, and passed their nights generally in a most agreeable manner, deriving from an unrestricted interchange of sentiment, infinite amusement and instruction. To these wards during the night, there were no guardians: the individuals therein confined were alone, and enjoyed each other's society without interruption. The watchmen, it is true, alternately went their rounds, and slept with great vigilance; but except in the event of the unfortunate prisoners being sufficiently loud in the expression of their mirth, to keep the governor and his family awake—an occurrence which was not then by any means unfrequent—there was no interference: the merry jest went round, and the practical joke succeeded, and all seemed to be indicative of general joy. A jovial night was sure to follow the introduction of an individual who happened to treat them with contempt instead of beer—of which they were then allowed to have an unlimited quantity; and as it will hence be inferred by the acute, that Mr Cavendish, under the circumstances, stood but little chance of having a very pleasant night's rest, it may be perhaps as well at once to explain that such inference is strictly correct.

While he and George were engaged in the conversation before re-

ferred to the leaders of the popular party were laying down their plans; and as these were very speedily matured, they amused themselves with feelings of intense satisfaction until the time at which they were all locked up for the night.

Unhappily, at least in the estimation of the great majority of these gentlemen, they could not all enjoy the anticipated sport; but as the particular ward into which Mr. Cavendish was introduced contained just twenty beds, nineteen of them had the felicity of passing the night in his society, and it is quite worthy of being remarked that the facility with which they all appeared to go to sleep was amazing.

Having been in a state of excitement during the day, and feeling, therefore, much fatigued, Mr. Cavendish soon sank into oblivion with as little suspicion as a newly-born babe, and anon began to snore—and whenever he *did* take it into his nose to snore, his tones proved him to be a powerful performer—when, being thus convinced of the soundness of his soft sweet sleep, two of the ringleaders rose, and having drawn off his blanket and coverlet, one of them returned to his bed and threw a shoe at him quietly, while the other stood solemnly at his feet in the similitude of a spectre.

There was just sufficient light in the ward at the time to enable a man to see an apparition of that character distinctly, and when Cavendish answered the appeal which the shoe had made to his feelings, by opening his eyes, the ghost threw him into a profuse state of cold perspiration. He was dreadfully alarmed. He had no settled faith in supernatural appearances, no fixed belief in the tangible character of an immaterial thing, and yet he felt that which he then saw before him had pulled off his blanket and quilt! And he trembled with violence at the idea, and glared with all the power at his command, and when the spectre groaned, after the manner of spectres, he was fairly struck with horror. And yet—was it really a ghost? He couldn't say it wasn't—there it was! Still, although it appeared a *bonâ fide* affair, was it—was it not—an optical illusion? The spectre, conceiving that this was pretty well for a beginning, said "Beware!" in a sepulchral tone, three times, as regular spectres invariably do, and then retired majestically to the crib from which it rose, and disappeared with so much ingenuity that, in the view of Mr. Cavendish, it sank in the most direct manner possible into the earth. And yet—oh, it was ridiculous! —how could it? It couldn't. It *was* a mere optical illusion! But then, who had pulled off the bed-clothes? That was the point. But no matter. He pulled them on again. He wouldn't believe in ghosts. He'd see them all at Jericho before he'd believe in them. Ghosts!—pooh!—absurd! He tucked himself up with great courage, re-adjusted his night cap, and very soon recommenced snoring.

This being the recognised signal for the safe renewal of operations, the *ci-devant* spectre and his deputy again gently glided out of bed, and having emptied a jug of water into the elegant boots of Mr. Cavendish, passed a pen-knife dexterously along the seams of his coat, cut the collar off his waistcoat, and established a few striking pen and ink portraits upon the prominent parts of his white kerseymere

trowsers, they produced a piece of cord with a noose at one end, into which they slipped one of the great toes of Mr. Cavendish, with all the quiet dexterity of Indian thieves.

Now it may not be generally known that this process is technically termed *toe lining*—that nature invariably prompts a toe-lined individual to pull up his foot with great force on awaking—that the pain produced by this extremely natural movement is remarkably acute, and that, as a general thing, the victim doesn't know what to make of it at all. It will hence be correct to explain that such are really the facts of the case—that the more a man pulls in that case, the more he feels it, and that although it is usual to tie the other end of the cord to the bedstead, it was in this particular instance attached to one of the legs of the individual who slept immediately opposite, and who, being a fresh man, was not *au fait* in any sense of the term.

The cord then having been thus arranged with great care, and of course with a proper regard unto silence, the conspirators returned to their respective cribs, and arming themselves with two jugs of cold water, directed the contents at the head of Mr. Cavendish, with admirable precision and force.

In an instant—in the twinkling of an eye—that gentleman awoke, and feeling something unusual attached to his toe, pulled it up with surpassing sharpness, and as that gave him pain, he cried as naturally as possible, "*Oh!*" three times, with the most perfect distinctness.

"What are you at?" demanded the beauty opposite, who feeling a tug at his leg, drew it up very promptly, and gave thereby an excruciating twinge to Mr. Cavendish, who roared again,

"What are you about?—Do you hear?—Let go, you sir, will you!"

"Murder!" roared Cavendish. "Murder!—OH!" And he really did feel it acutely.

"Let *go*, I tell you!—*let* go your hold!" cried the man in the opposite bed, who was very indignant, and shook his fist fiercely, and pulled up his leg with great power—torturing Cavendish at every pull, as a natural matter of course—while the popular party were roaring with laughter, it being a thing which they really enjoyed.

"Mur-der! Mur-*der*!! Mur-DER!!!" shouted Cavendish; for the ferocious person opposite kept tugging with so much violence, that he actually believed that the design was to tug his toe positively off.

"*Will* you let go," cried that person, "before I get up and trounce you?" And he pulled away again with great muscular strength.

"Oh! oh! oh! Murder!" reiterated Cavendish, for the thing had become extremely agonising. "Oh!—Murder!—Fire!—Thieves!—Oh!—Mur-*der!*"

At this auspicious moment the door of the ward opened, and the instant the watchmen entered with the governor of the prison—who being a man of courage kept strictly in the rear—the popular party suppressed their hearty laughter, and each assumed, as if by magic, an expression of alarm.

"Now then—hollo!—what's all this?" demanded the governor.

"Oh, here, here!" cried Cavendish piteously.

"What do you mean by kicking up this hollabaloo, eh?"

"O my toe, my toe!" exclaimed Cavendish, in tones which would have pierced the heart of any strictly regular philanthropist going.

"Your *toe!*" cried the governor contemptuously, as he cut the cord. "*Blister* your toe! I wish there wasn't a toe upon the face of the blessed earth!"

And this, strange as it may appear, was an extremely natural wish, inasmuch as he had frequently been called from his bed by the uproar produced by the torture of a toe.

"Who did this?" he demanded precisely as if he expected to be told. "D'ye hear—who did it?"

That was the question. Who *could* have done it?—Nobody, of course! It was perfectly ridiculous to suppose that it was anybody. The popular party looked as innocent as lambs, while Cavendish was tenderly nursing his toe, which was as nearly as possible cut to the bone.

"I'll give a crown out of my own pocket," cried the governor in the plenitude of his liberality, "to know who it was."

The temptation was not, however, sufficiently strong; the popular party were silent, and when the person who had by his impetuous pulls inflicted so much pain upon Mr. Cavendish, had succeeded in releasing his leg from the cord, said to the watchmen, who were examining that gentleman's wound with a sympathy for which they expected to be paid, "I say, when you've done with him, just let's have a look here."

The governor, however, who as a man of the world was anxious to return to his bed, at once directed the watchmen to follow him; and having with great severity, both of aspect and of tone, informed the popular party that if he heard any more noise he'd lock up the lot in peculiar cells, he and his faithful attendants retired from the ward to the horror of Mr. Cavendish, who with extreme rationality expected another attack.

The individual opposite, being incensed, for his leg was very painful, then offered to fight any one of them for ten pounds aside in a regular ring within a week, or to take a couple of them—one down the other come on—with either his left or his right tied behind him; but albeit this challenge was given in a singularly accommodating spirit, it was not accepted by the popular party, who continued to laugh while Cavendish groaned and kept with his friend opposite strictly on the watch.

In the morning, on being summoned from the ward, Mr. Cavendish rose with the rest; but picture his horror, ye who are blessed with vivid powers of imagination, when on drawing on his elegant white trowsers he beheld those artistical pen-and ink portraits, with which they had been embellished by the *ci-devant* ghost! At first he was absolutely dumb with amazement, and stared at the portraits, and then at his worthy friend opposite, and then at the popular party—the whole of whom burst into a roar—with an expression which developed an enquiring spirit. His amazement was, however, soon supplanted by in-

dignation, and he blustered boldly, and was about to seize one of the conspirators by the throat on speculation, but finding himself so dreadfully lame that he could bear but one foot to touch the ground, he was compelled to relinquish the attempt.

The importance of having his trowsers thus adorned, would, had he been at home, have been comparatively slight, as he could, in that case, have put on another pair at once; but here he had not another pair, and as it was exceedingly questionable whether there was another pair in the prison that would fit him, he naturally felt that the only course to be pursued, was to despatch a messenger immediately to his house, and to lie in bed quietly until he returned. He therefore sent for the governor, and having exhibited the garment with appropriate feeling, inquired first, whether he had ever in his life heard of conduct so shameful; and secondly, what under the afflicting circumstances of the case, he would advise.

The governor smiled as he viewed the trowsers--he couldn't help smiling, albeit, he compromised, to a certain extent, his official dignity thereby; and having remarked that they certainly were devils to look at, he gave his advice, which was strictly to the effect that a man should be sent for another pair at once, and kindly offered to lend him a pair of his own to wear until the messenger returned.

This offer was accepted with gratitude by Cavendish, who then explained with due eloquence the awful characteristics of the night he had passed; and having complimented the governor highly upon his being a kindred spirit and a man of the world, he put it to him whether he, as a man of the world, knew of any thing more excruciating than that particular species of toe torture which he had the previous night undergone.

In answer to this solemn interrogatory, the governor couldn't affirm that he did. "But," said he, "about the clothes,—I suppose that the rest are all right?"

"I *suppose* so," returned Mr. Cavendish, who instinctively took up his waistcoat, and found it minus the collar, and then examined his coat, which he perceived had been ripped in all directions, while the governor politely inspected the boots, which contained as much water as they could hold.

The governor looked at Mr. Cavendish, and Mr. Cavendish looked at the governor, who at length observed, that they had completed their work.

"But can you not punish the villains?" demanded Mr. Cavendish.

"I can, and will if you point them out!"

"There is the difficulty. That I can't do. But I'd punish them all, and thus be sure that I'd punish the right!" Which was an extremely just, correct, and philosophical observation.

"Well, we'll see about that," said the governor. "I'll send you a whole suit, and a man shall be in readiness to receive your instructions."

Whereupon he left the ward with a view of looking out a suit of his own, but as on reaching the yard he was struck with an idea that his

clothes would not by any means fit Mr. Cavendish, he went to the largest turnkey he had, and having told him what was wanted, that person ran home for the suit which he wore on Sundays, with an alacrity which could only be prompted by the lively anticipation of a liberal reward.

Now the turnkey in question not only weighed seventeen stone, but stood about six feet two and a half high, and as the height of Mr. Cavendish did not exceed four feet eleven, he correctly thought that *his* clothes would not be too small. He therefore lost no time in procuring what he felt to be necessary: namely, his best top-boots, a pair of yellow buckskin breeches, a buff waistcoat, and a blue coat fit for any nobleman in the land, with cross pockets sufficiently capacious to carry twins of four years old and upwards, and these extremely gentlemanlike habiliments he conveyed forthwith to Mr. Cavendish on his return.

Mr. Cavendish, as in duty bound, received them with thanks; and when the turnkey had quitted the ward, he commenced an inspection, the result of which was not in the slightest degree favourable. He didn't at all like the look of them; still feeling as a matter of courtesy to the governor, compelled to put them on, he in the first place got into the buckskins. These he tried with great zeal to adjust so as to bring them a *little* near the mark; but although he braced them up with unequivocal tightness he couldn t prevail upon the knee caps by any means to come an inch higher than his ancles. He notwithstanding kept them on and tried the waistcoat, the pockets of which descended six inches below his hips, while the tails of the coat which he subsequently entered reached fairly to his heels. That in fact was the only garment which he seemed to require, it covered him so completely: he nevertheless boldly walked into the boots, which were nothing at all of a fit, when although he really couldn't tell exactly, having no looking-glass there, he felt inspired with a notion that he might look a beauty; and he did: his *tout ensemble* was rich in the extreme; and when he limped into the yard with the view of joining George, his appearance was the signal for a loud burst of laughter which continued to ring for a long time merrily, peal upon peal.

CHAPTER XXVII.

GEORGE'S EMBARRASSMENTS INCREASE.

ALTHOUGH George was for a time much amused by the appearance of Cavendish, who, until the return of the messenger whom he had dispatched with full instructions, looked all coat and boots, his anxiety

for the expiration of the required notice of bail was intense. He did not know why he should feel apprehensive—there was nothing that really appeared then to justify the feeling—yet he felt apprehensive, nevertheless, that his bail would be rejected notwithstanding Bull had got a man of immense wealth to join him. He tried to banish that feeling, but could not: it haunted him still, and continued to haunt him until the time had expired, when his firm and faithful friend came with a heavy heart to announce the sad realisation of his fears! The bail *had* been rejected; both Bull and his friend had been refused; and as it hence became necessary to secure other friends, and to serve a fresh notice, George at once clearly saw that he should have to do that of which the bare idea tortured him: namely, to let Julia know the position in which he had been placed.

He mentioned this subject to Bull, who advised him to do so at once, strongly urging that as other friends could not be procured before the morning, three days would elapse before he could regain his liberty if even those friends were accepted, of which he could not, from the manner in which he had been treated, but entertain a doubt; but George being most anxious to withhold, if possible, the affliction which he knew the information would induce, would not consent to its being imparted until at least two other friends had been tried, and therefore begged of Bull to go direct to Julia, and to state that he had been most unexpectedly detained, and that his absence for a day or two longer could not be avoided.

Bull did so, and the gloom which the intelligence cast over all at once convinced him that George had pursued the best course, and having answered evasively the many earnest questions proposed, he took his leave with apparent gaiety, and proceeded, without a moment's delay, to the private residences of two old friends, upon whom he prevailed that night to become bail for George.

In the morning accordingly notice was given, and George, who was duly advised of the fact, became cheerful again; but as in the course of the day those gentlemen were waited upon by Sir Richard, who represented George's character as being most atrocious—describing him as the leader of a gang of ruffians, the prince of swindlers, and so on—they became so alarmed at the idea of being supposed to be in any way connected with such a person, that they immediately withdrew their names.

Bull, on being informed of this, offered to indemnify them; to place in their hands in fact, at once, the sum for which they were required to be bound; but that in their judgment was not the point; it was the thought of being associated with such a man; they considered their reputation to be at stake—their reputation, which, they held, would be tarnished by such an association, if not indeed blasted for ever.

Bull, therefore, resolved to do all in his power to serve him whose innocence of the crime charged against him he knew, whom he regarded as a son, and to whom he became more attached in proportion as the

virulence of his persecutors increased, sought two other friends, and having found them, sent in a fresh notice that day.

Upon these friends Sir Richard also called, but Bull had prepared them for his visit; he had prepared them to treat his misrepresentations with scorn, which they did, and being intelligent men, lectured him severely upon the *infamous* course he was pursuing; but he, nothing daunted, caused letters to be sent to the wives of these gentlemen, wherein George's character was painted so black, that tears and entreaties at length so unmanned them, that their names were also withdrawn.

Other friends were procured, and similar means were employed with success. Placards were posted all over the town, not only describing George as the most consummate villain, but setting forth the names of those who proposed to become his sureties, and concluding with "These are the men—the RESPECTABLE men—who are about to become his bail!—the bail of the Prince!—the prince of swindlers!" which had so powerful an effect, that at length Bull could not find a friend possessed of courage sufficient to come forward.

Such being the case, it of course became utterly useless to attempt to conceal the real state of things any longer from Julia. George, therefore, having been absent nearly five days, wrote to her, describing his position, explaining the cause, beseeching her not to feel in the slightest degree alarmed, and assuring her that the issue in his favour would be triumphant.

Bull was the bearer of this letter, and before he delivered it into her hands, he carefully prepared her to receive the contents. He explained the affair from first to last, entered into the whole of the minutiæ of the transaction, and having brought all the collateral circumstances to bear upon the one great point, he assured her that there was nothing but a little inconvenience to be apprehended—nothing beyond that to fear.

This was done in the presence of Helen and the curate. Bull thought it much better to put them at once in possession of the facts, and so distinctly were they explained to them, and so clearly did they see the base objects proposed, that they joined him in expressing the firmest conviction that such objects could not succeed.

Julia then read the letter. She was firmer, much firmer than might have been expected, although the tears flowed freely as she read. Upon the honour of George she, of course, placed the fullest reliance: she knew him to be incapable of that of which he was accused, and had therefore no fear of the result; but the thought of his being thus cruelly persecuted—persecuted, too, by her father, whom he had been anxious to conciliate and to serve—afflicted her more than could the heaviest charge which malice itself had the power to prefer.

"Can I not see him?" she enquired calmly, after having been for some time buried in thought.

"Certainly!" replied Bull; "oh, certainly!"

"Now?—to-day?"

"Why, I should, under the circumstances, advise you not to go before to-morrow."

"But *I* may go to-day," cried the curate, who was shocked beyond conception.

"Oh, yes," replied Bull; "we'll go together."

"Do so, my good kind friends," cried Julia. "And tell him that I am calm, and firm, quite firm: I *would* not" she added with half-choked utterance, as a flood of tears gushed from her eyes, "I would not have him think that I am not firm."

Both Bull and the curate endeavoured to console her; and having promised to return early in the evening, they hoped with good news, they took leave and proceeded direct to the prison.

It being now manifest to all that Sir Richard had resolved that George should not be bailed, although two men of straw had been accepted as security for Cavendish, who, in consequence regained his liberty the moment the forty-eight hours had expired, it was suggested that an application should be made to a judge at chambers for writs of habeas corpus and certiorari, whereby the proceedings might be removed into the Court of King's Bench, and George brought before the judge to have such bail fixed as the exigency of the case might appear to require. George consented to this, and the necessary affidavits were made. A little delay was, however, unavoidable, it being the long vacation, and none of the judges were in town; but when at length one arrived, the case was taken before him without delay. Mr. Bounsom on the part of the prosecution, however, opposed the application, and having bought over Cavendish, who had sworn eternal friendship to George, produced a long affidavit made by that faithful creature, wherein he had sworn that the application for the removal was contrary to *his* inclination, inasmuch, as he would greatly prefer taking his trial at the sessions

The judge, however, perceiving a strong development of vindictiveness on the part of the prosecution, ordered a sum of money to be lodged by George at the Crown Office, sufficient to cover any extra expense that Mr. Cavendish might be put to by the removal, and granted the writs!—reducing the amount of bail for two sureties in 500*l.* each, to two in 200*l.* each, and proposed to take the bail on the Monday following at the house of a friend about twelve miles from town.

On the following Monday, George accompanied by one of the chief officers of the prison, his solicitor, Bull, and the wealthy friend whose bail had been in the first instance rejected, accordingly proceeded in a carriage to the house at which the judge was then staying. On their arrival, no one on the part of the prosecution appeared, and the justification was therefore postponed for an hour, at the expiration of which time a young barrister arrived with instructions not only to oppose the bail, but in setting forth the grounds of the opposition to occupy as much time as possible.

The object of this may at once be explained: Mr. Bounsom knowing the futility of attempting to trifle with a judge who would feel himself

bound to accept the bail offered, recommended Sir Richard to prefer a bill of indictment for felony, in which Tynte might be charged with stealing the bills, and George with receiving them knowing them to have been stolen; and as the intermediate sessions at Clerkenwell commenced the very day on which the judge had proposed to take the bail they had instructed the barrister to postpone the justification as long as possible, in order that in the interim a "true bill" for felony might be found.

In pursuance of this instruction, the barrister in question was remarkably wordy: he explained, repeated, revised, submitted, suggested, and quoted with so much ingenuity, that although he had been at it for nearly two hours he appeared to be only commencing his address, when Bounsom and an officer arrived to inform his lordship that they had a warrant against the prisoner for felony.

The ingenious barrister at once finished his address, and as this was a case in which the judge could not of course interfere, he merely directed that the bail in the case of conspiracy, should be deemed to have justified in the event of a certain action, referred to by the barrister, having been settled—a certificate of which fact would be all that was necessary: and George, after dining with his friends on the road, returned in the evening with the officer, who had the most perfect confidence in him, to the prison.

In the morning it was ascertained that a "true bill" *had* been found, and that placards, offering 200*l.* reward for the apprehension of Tynte, had been posted in every part of the town. George, therefore, caused an immediate application to be made to the chairman of the sessions, to fix the day for his trial, being anxious to meet the charge at once. This, however, was not the object of Sir Richard, who caused the motion to be opposed on the ground that certain parties, whose evidence was essential to the establishment of the case, had not yet been subpœnaed; the consequence of which was, that the court postponed the trial until the next sessions, but consented, on application, to take the same amount of bail as that which the chairman—not the judge—had fixed before. But the self-same vexatious opposition to the bail was offered in this as in the former case, the same vile means were employed to intimidate those who were anxious to come forward: the newspapers were had recourse to with the view of exciting a public prejudice against George, who had ascertained beyond doubt, that an intimacy had existed for years between Sir Richard and the chairman; and this, coupled with other valuable information, obtained from various quarters, induced the conviction that at the sessions a fair trial would be altogether out of the question.

He therefore drew up a long affidavit, in which he set forth the whole of the facts in justification of a motion to transfer his trial to the judges, on the grounds, first, that he could not have an impartial trial before the chairman at the sessions; and secondly, that as this case would necessarily involve some of the most important points of commercial law, it ought to be tried before the highest legal authorities in the realm.

Strange as it may appear, there was not a single barrister practising in that court who had sufficient courage to make this motion. The affidavit was offered to them all; but the whole of them declined on the ground that the disposition of the chairman was so tyrannous and vindictive, that their interests, if they opposed him, were sure to be injured.

Being resolved, notwithstanding, that the motion should be made, he caused himself to be taken into court, where he read the affidavit, and made the motion himself. It was opposed, of course, by the counsel engaged for the prosecution, and that conscientious gentleman eulogised highly the worth and talent of the chairman—whom in his heart he despised—while he indulged in the vilest abuse of George, whom he termed a felon, and applied many other opprobrious epithets—to the delight of the *honourable* court—and worked up his reply by announcing, that upon his honour the highest pleasure he ever experienced had been derived from a knowledge of the fact, that no gentleman practising in that court could be found to read the felon's affidavit, impugning as it did the immaculate purity and strict impartiality of the chairman, whose courtesy on all occasions, he and the whole of his learned brethren, were so proud to acknowledge, and whose bright reputation the fetid breath of calumny had never before even attempted to dim.

George treated all this with contempt of course, and regarded the slave with the utmost scorn, while the "learned brethren" trod upon each others' toes, and made up divers extraordinary faces in order to intimate privately that they thought it excessively rich; but the heart of the chairman approved of it all, and having smiled with the utmost satisfaction with the view of conveying the idea of its being all received, he proceeded to announce that the trial should not be removed, that no legal points could by any possibility arise that he was not perfectly competent to decide; and that, as his motion had been made—assuming as it did the probability of his mind being prejudiced against the prisoner—he had firmly resolved not to accept bail at all This was a great point for Sir Richard, who left the court with a fiendlike smile, and George was at once taken back to the New Prison.

It will be necessary now to return to Tynte; and it may, in the first place, be stated that, after having so narrowly escaped being captured by Fred in the hole or well called Mutton-hill, he remained concealed until night, when, muffled up to the eyes, he proceeded westward, being resolved to remain in town for the purpose of embracing the earliest opportunity of wreaking his vengeance upon Joseph, whose treachery to him had now become so glaring.

There are in various parts of London certain private hotels at which men may reside in concealment for years without the slightest chance of their retreat being discovered, and which possess all the advantages of public hotels, while the proprietors, being aware that secrecy is the object of their patrons, as a matter of interest study to promote that object by all the means at their command.

To one of these hotels in the vicinity of the Edgware-road Tynte

repaired, and having sufficiently reflected upon the scheme conceived by Joseph for the destruction of both George and himself, he, shuddering at the idea of that scheme being successful as far as he was concerned, and having the most perfect confidence in George's firmness and talent, thought the wisest and safest plan would be to open a correspondence with him at once.

He accordingly sent for an old man upon whose prudence and faith he had been in the habit of relying for years without the smallest apprehension of being betrayed, and having explained to him the necessity for observing the utmost caution, commissioned him to deliver a letter to George, in which he minutely described every circumstance connected with the scheme, and warned George against his attorney, whom he knew to be in daily communication with Sir Richard and Bounsom.

This letter—albeit he was not much amazed at its contents—George held to be highly important. It made him master of the whole case—placed every fact clearly before him: he saw it all, all that he had before but suspected was now plainly proved.

Instead therefore of treating Tynte, heartless villain as he was, with contempt, he returned a short note in which he acknowledged the receipt of his letter, and requested him to send any other information he had the power to impart.

Situated as he then was, and considering the iniquitous scheme which had been conceived solely with a view to his ruin, George felt himself justified in holding communication with even such a man as Tynte, who from time to time sent him important information, and who really appeared to be most anxious to render him all the assistance in his power.

Thus armed at all points to meet the charge, George set to work in earnest to prepare his defence; he made a note of every fact, and having firmly resolved that nothing either directly or collaterally bearing upon the case should be concealed, awaited his trial in the perfect conviction that his innocence would be triumphantly established, while infamy would alight upon the heads of those who had thus sought to compass his ruin.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JULIA'S LAST INTERVIEW WITH HER FATHER.

NOTWITHSTANDING the earnest assurances of George that he must be triumphant, that truth must prevail, and that he soon should return

to his happy home with a character unstained, Julia, having a woman's heart, inspired all a woman's fears.

She had visited George daily—the governor, who was an extremely considerate man, having removed him to the infirmary, in which their interviews took place—she had become quite conversant with the bearings of the whole transaction; and not only felt sure that he was innocent of the charge alleged against him, but that he possessed sufficient talent to make that innocence appear. Still she feared that some accident might happen, that something unforeseen might occur to prevent him from establishing his case before the court, and in these apprehensions she was joined by his deeply afflicted mother, who on hearing of the circumstance had hastened up to town.

The curate too, who passed three days in each week with them, dreaded the approach of the day of trial; not that he entertained the slightest idea of the possibility of George being found guilty, but because it was one of his favourite maxims that the wicked will prevail for a time, though the righteous are certain to prosper in the end.

"I have been thinking," said he to Julia, when the sessions were at hand, "of a proceeding which may possibly tend to induce Sir Richard to carry his vindictiveness against Mr. Julian no farther."

"Would to Heaven!" exclaimed Julia fervently, "that he could be induced to rest satisfied with the injury he has already inflicted; but I fear that he is inexorable"

"It strikes me," rejoined the curate, "that that which I am about to propose will have a tendency to move him."

"What is it?" cried Julia. "Is it anything that I can do? What do you propose?"

"I'll explain. Mrs. Julian, your father is a man, and being a man he must of necessity have the heart of a man within his breast. It is manifest, therefore, that if that heart be touched, and touched it must be if an appeal to it be properly made, it must feel."

Julia sighed.

"Now suppose," continued the curate, "suppose that you and I were to call upon him quietly, with the view of representing the real facts of the case as they stand, don't you think—I merely ask you —*don't* you think, that he would listen to us calmly, and argue the point?

"I fear not," replied Julia. "But if you think it probable—nay, if you think it even possible to prevail upon him to do so, pray let us without delay make the attempt. Do you *think* that he can be persuaded?"

"Why, I cannot exactly conceive a state of mind into which it is impossible for conviction to enter!"

"But conviction has entered: unhappily his mind is filled with the conviction that George has wronged him!"

"Then that conviction must be removed. His mind must be disabused. It is abundantly clear that he has been led to believe that Mr. Julian is really the guilty man; it is therefore high time to make him

acquainted with the real facts, that his eyes may be opened to see where the guilt in reality lies."

"Do you then think that his mind has been abused?—that he *has* been proceeding in ignorance?"

"No doubt of it!—*I* have no doubt in the world! He either knows the real character of Mr. Julian, or he does not. If he does, he cannot suppose him to be guilty; whereas, if he does not, the very fact of his supposing him to be guilty, sufficiently proves that he has been on the subject deluded My firm impression is, that he doesn't know the facts of the case, and that as, we *do*, it is our duty to explain them."

"Heaven grant that he may hear them explained! Is there a hope that he will?"

"Why should he not? If there be one thing which men detest more than any other, it is deception when practised upon themselves, and I know of nothing which men are more ready to repudiate when proved. Let us therefore go and tell him at once that he is deceived: let us give him a history of the deception: let us prove to him that he is but the dupe of a designing wicked man, and I have not the slightest fear of the result."

"But George – will he consent to our going?"

"Let us go without naming the subject to him."

"I have never yet taken any step of importance without obtaining his consent?"

"My dear madam, allow me to take the responsibility upon myself."

"But can it possibly injure him if we should fail?"

"Most decidedly not. But my firm impression is, that we shall not fail. I am exceedingly sanguine of success. I feel convinced that he will clearly see the error into which he has been led, and be anxious to make all the reparation in his power."

"We will go then: we'll go this very day—nay, at once. If we can but convince him that he has been on the subject of dear George's character deceived, I shall be happy."

"Be assured that of that we shall convince him, and that a reconciliation will immediately follow. But go and prepare: let us lose no time: be sure that we shall be successful."

Julia then left the room, and soon after returned with Mrs. Julian, senior, who had earnestly begged to be allowed to accompany them, and as no objection was offered, they proceeded together to the house at which Sir Richard was staying.

On their arrival, having learned that Sir Richard was within, the curate sent up his card; and when the servant had been desired to show him up, he and the ladies were ushered into the room in which Sir Richard was sitting.

The very moment they entered, he rose, not indeed as a matter of courtesy, but with a withering scowl which seemed to intimate that their visit had amazed him.

"You here!" he cried. "How dare you thus force yourself into my presence."

"My dear sir, I beg pardon," said the curate; "but I sent up my card."

"I know you did; but how could I tell by your card who you were? What do you want?"

"I came accompanied by your child—"

"Child!—my child!—I have no child: I long ago disowned her. But I suppose that she has been sent to beg for mercy by her husband the felon!"

"He is no felon, father," returned Julia, in solemn touching tones.

"He *is* a felon! Have you *not* then been sent to beg for mercy?"

"No."

"Why then are you here?"

"To convince you, father, if possible, that you have been deceived."

"Of that I am already convinced. I *have* been deceived: I well know it."

"But you know not by whom. Father!—dear father!—let me explain."

"I want no explanation!—I'll have none. Go!—return to the gaol!—to your husband the felon!"

"Indeed, dear father, you wrong him: you wrong yourself:—Father!—pray let me explain! I am convinced that you will be sorry when you find that you have been led into error."

"Silence!—I'll not hear another word from you!"

"Then let *me* assure you," said the curate, "that your mind has been abused."

"What do you know about it?"

"More—I solemnly declare to you, much more—than has come to your knowledge."

"Then keep it to yourself. I know enough!"

"Not for your own peace of mind hereafter. Again let me assure you, upon my honour, that you are deceived."

"By whom?"

"By him who has prompted you to pursue this course."

"My own heart prompted me: what do you mean?"

"Were you not induced to take this step by Joseph Broadbridge?"

"Well!—And what then?"

"I can show that he it was who suggested the scheme for obtaining those bills of exchange."

"Indeed. And you would like me to believe it? But if even you *can* show this, will that prove the felon's innocence."

"I am here prepared to prove it—"

"Let him prove it himself on the day of trial. That day will soon be here!—he need not be impatient—the proof will keep! Let him prove it himself."

"But surely if it be proved now to your satisfaction, you will not think of going to trial?"

"Oh, that's it, is it?—I thought it would come out at last. So he begins to be afraid to take his trial?"

"No, he is *not* afraid."

"Then why has he sent you here with a lie in your mouth to induce me to let him escape?"

"He did not send me here."

"I don't believe a word of it."

"He doesn't even know of my coming."

"I tell you again I don't believe a word of it. You know that you were sent: you know that this lie about Broadbridge was hatched expressly in order to persuade me to let the felon off!"

"I do assure you by all that is sacred—"

"It won't do, I tell you! You are mistaken in your man. I have caught him on the hip, and he shall not escape. He shall have no mercy from me. If there's law in the land I'll transport him, and the sooner society is rid of him the better."

"But *will* you not let me explain calmly?—consider—"

"I have considered! I know the man with whom I have to deal: I know him to be the Prince of Swindlers!"

"Indeed you are mistaken," said Mrs. Julian, who could no longer repress her indignation; "my son is no swindler: he is as honourable—"

"Hold your tongue, woman!—how dare you talk to me!"

"I have a mother's feelings, sir—"

"For Heaven's sake, be silent!" cried Julia. "Father!" she added, —"for although you cast me off, I must call you father still—as I hope for mercy from Him to whom all hearts are open, he is innocent! Oh, let me prove to you—"

"Silence! I have had enough of you. And now leave the house all of you."

"But shall I," said the curate, "call when you are more at leisure?"

"No! never let me see you again."

"But I should like to have some talk with you on the subject quietly."

"Keep your talk to yourself, or talk to those who will hear you: *I* want none of your talk."

"But may I not call?"

"No, I tell you! If I catch you in this house again, I'll have you kicked into the street."

The curate was so utterly shocked at this, that as Sir Richard stood with the door in his hand, he walked out without saying another word, and when Julia's last appeal had been contemptuously spurned, and Mrs. Julian's indignant epithet "monster" had been answered by the drawing-room door being violently closed, they left the house with mingled feelings of sadness and disgust.

"God forgive him!" exclaimed the curate, as he turned from the door.

"Did you ever in all your life see such a brute?" cried Mrs. Julian.

"God forgive him!" the curate repeated, and then turning his attention to Julia, who felt sick at heart, he endeavoured to raise her spirits, and to reinspire her with hope. "We are," said he, "but in

the same position as before, and although our appeal to him as been unsuccessful, its failure should not induce despair. I am as sanguine as ever of the triumphant acquittal of Mr. Julian; I feel perfectly sure that his cause, being that of truth and justice, will prevail: and although it would have been a happy thing had we succeeded in saving him from the ordeal of a public trial, nothing has transpired to shake my conviction that that ordeal will be successfully passed."

Julia felt, when the appeal to her father had been rejected, as if the fate of him whom she loved more fondly than ever had been sealed; but this feeling was soon subdued by the reasoning of the curate, at whose suggestion it was eventually decided that, until after the trial, George should not know that that appeal had been made.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE TRIAL.

The day fixed for the trial at length arrived, and no warrior was ever more anxious to meet his foe than George was to face his accusers. He was, however, calm and collected: he exhibited no eagerness, no haste: he looked like a man self-possessed, and firm in the consciousness of innocence.

Having entered the court, which was crowded to excess—his case having excited an extraordinary sensation—he bowed to the magistrates, of whom there were upwards of thirty present, and then addressing the chairman firmly, but respectfully, repeated his objection to be tried by him, and begged to remind him of the fact of his having been subpœnaed as a witness. The chairman smiled and bowed with an affectation of politeness, but stated his firm determination to preside; and notwithstanding George mildly pointed out the indelicacy of this determination, when he had sworn that in consequence of his intimacy with Sir Richard and other collateral circumstances connected with the indictment, his mind was so prejudiced against him, that he could not have before him an impartial trial, he remained still immovable.

The jury was then sworn, and the case for the prosecution was opened by the most formidable of the three counsel arrayed against him, and the display of virulence on the part of that learned individual throughout his address surpassed all his previous efforts, albeit virulence formed one of his chief characteristics.

This malignant address was repeatedly interrupted by the counsel employed by George to watch the case, and much angry discussion arose between him and the counsel for the prosecution; but on such excellent terms was that gentleman with the chairman, that every appeal was

decided in his favour. George's counsel also took some objections to the indictment, and raised several points of law; but while the former were overruled, the latter were invariably decided against him: the chairman even refusing to take a note of them, that the opinion of the judges might be taken thereafter, declaring his competency, and insisting upon deciding the whole case himself: indeed, it soon became manifest that George's objection to be tried by him was not raised without sufficient grounds.

At length the opening address was concluded, and the first witness called was Sir Richard. A powerful feeling of revenge was developed in his countenance as he entered the box, and the manner in which he gave the whole of his evidence, proved clearly that if he could have taken George's life, he would gladly have done so.

At this period the alteration of the law which forbade counsel to address the jury on behalf of the prisoner in cases of felony, had not taken place; but when Sir Richard had given his evidence, the counsel whom George had engaged, strongly advised him to leave the cross-examination of the witnesses to him. George, however, still refused, not in consequence of any feeling of self-sufficiency or presumption, but solely because he had witnessed the influence which the chairman possessed over all who then practised in that court, and this refusal was rendered more firm by the strong recommendation of the chairman himself that he should leave the whole case in his counsel's hands.

The cross-examination of Sir Richard then commenced, and George conducted it with calmness and infinite tact. He drew from him every circumstance connected with the mode in which Tynte obtained the bills, and the manner in which he became acquainted with Joseph; and although he more than once threw the hot knight into a towering passion by drawing answers from him which tended to weaken his case, he himself stood perfectly unmoved.

Several witnesses were then called to prove that certain letters were in George's handwriting; but although these witnesses had been hired for the purpose, they failed to attain the object proposed, for while George made it manifest that those letters were forgeries; he made the parties who had sworn that they had been written by him, admit that they had never before seen his handwriting in their lives.

At length a desperate attempt was made by a witness, who had been brought from the Fleet for the purpose, to prove that the body of one of the bills was in George's handwriting. The proof of this, however, the chairman seemed anxious to avoid—conceiving that if that were established, the indictment would not stand, as it would make George a principal in the transaction. He therefore, after the fellow had been searchingly cross-examined, admitted that his evidence ought not to be received, and lectured him severely on his unblushing temerity in presenting himself as a witness in the case.

George now every moment expected to hear the name of Joseph Broadbridge called, and exulted in a feeling of certainty that he should be able by cross-examining *him* to make his innocence apparent, but

while he was thus exulting, the name of Cavendish echoed through the hall, which utterly amazed him.

It will here be right to observe that although this man Cavendish had been included in the indictment for conspiracy, in that for felony his name was omitted. He had been tampered with by Joseph, who had promised him not only a sum of money, but perfect protection, if he consented to swear that he had been induced to endorse the bills at the joint solicitation of Tynte and George in order to remove the appearance of collusion between them, that two hundred and fifty pounds only passed through his hands from George to Tynte, and that he received fifty pounds for his endorsement.

Cavendish had, when this proposition was made, represented to Joseph the risk he ran of being contradicted in his evidence by Bull, who was perfectly cognisant of the whole affair; but Joseph in addition to the threat he held out of indicting him also for felony in the event of his refusing to give evidence to this effect, pointed out to him that in order to counteract the weight that would attach to Bull's evidence, he being a man of known respectability and wealth, his character also must be assailed, and the whole of his transactions with George placed in a dishonourable light. Cavendish seeing that this might be done, and dreading the threatened indictment for felony, consented, and made up his mind to do all in his power to blast the reputation of both Bull and George.

The opening speech of the counsel for the prosecution prepared the minds of the jury for a disclosure of this kind, but no allusion whatever was made in it to Cavendish; for while they were anxious to take George by surprise, they were exceedingly apprehensive that at the last moment Cavendish would refuse to come forward, although they knew that he was under strict surveillance at a public-house in the vicinity of the court. During the few moments therefore that elapsed before he made his appearance, the anxiety expressed in the countenances of those who were engaged in the prosecution was apparent to all. He did however eventually appear, and having entered the box, became perhaps the most accommodating witness that ever stood before a jury. He had made up his mind to swear to anything in the world—he had come quite prepared to swear to anything, and therefore having at the suggestion of counsel assailed the character of every man connected with the transaction, but more especially that of Bull, he swore solemnly that it was George who had sent for and bargained with him to become the endorser of the bills; that the transaction took place in the presence of Tynte; that the reason assigned by George for wishing to have his endorsement was, that it might not be supposed that he and Tynte were connected; and that the terms being agreed upon, he received the sum of fifty pounds from George, on the express understanding that, should any inquiry be made, he should state that he won the amount of the bills at play, and took them to George for discount in the usual manner.

Having gone through all this in the most polished style, and with his customary tautological embellishments, George coolly proceeded to his cross-examination.

"Well, Mr. Cavendish," said he, and that gentleman shuddered at the sound of his voice; "you are of course aware that you have sworn to all this?"

"I have the honour to be aware that I have done so."

"And you have also the *honour* to be aware of its being, from first to last, utterly false. But do me the favour to explain to *me* how you became involved in this transaction."

Cavendish turned an enquiring eye to the box in which Joseph was sitting, and having been answered by a frown, replied, "Oh, yes—certainly—why—yes, of course you sent for me."

"Whom did I send?"

"Why—let me see—oh!—why, that fellow Tynte."

"That you solemnly swear?"

"Eh?—Oh, yes!"

"And you came to my office in consequence?"

"Oh, yes—I came to your office."

"With Tynte?"

"Why, of course. Now, you'll do yourself *no* good. Take my advice as a friendly friend, now, and ask no more questions."

"I have not, Mr. Cavendish, done with you yet. You came to my office, and I gave you the sum of fifty pounds for your endorsement?"

"You know that you did."

"You *swear* that I did?"

"Oh, yes!"

"In the presence of Tynte?"

Cavendish looked instinctively round to see if Tynte was in court, and having satisfied himself that he was not, returned his usual answer —"Oh, yes!"

"Did you not call upon me with those bills in you possession?"

"Most decidedly and undoubtedly not."

"You did not ask me to discount them for you?"

"Discount them for *me!* How came you to think of such a thing?"

"You will swear that you did *not?*"

"Oh, yes!"

"Nor did you, I suppose, leave two other bills with me for discount?"

"Two other bills! Why, I never heard of such a thing. It's all entirely new to me!"

"What was your object then in calling a few days afterwards, and stating in the presence of Mr. Bull that you received those bills in the regular way of business?"

"Bull? What's Bull? Who'd take his word for two-pence? You know he'd swear to any thing; you know it as well as I do!"

"All this is quite irrelevant, Mr. Cavendish; your object, and that of those who employed you, is, I perceive, to tarnish the character of Mr. Bull, in order that the evidence he is about to give may be doubted. That must be perfectly evident to the gentlemen of the jury; and therefore in your anxiety to accomplish that object you will signally

fail. My question to you, sir, was this: what was your object in calling a few days after I had discounted the first two bills, and stating that they and the two you had left with me for discount had been received by you in the regular way of business?"

Cavendish, whose faculties were greatly confused, although nothing could shake him from the grand points to which he had been instructed to stick, looked at Joseph and then at Sir Richard. and then at the counsel, and then suffered his eyes to wander independently about the court, until George exclaimed, "Look at me, sir!" and the chairman, in order to keep up the appearance of impartiality, desired him to "attend to the prisoner;" when he turned, and said, "What was it?—what did you say?"

George repeated the question, and Cavendish declared that it was the first he had ever heard of it.

"Do you mean to swear, sir," said George, "that you did *not* call and make that statement?"

"It's all foreign to me!—Greek and Italian: I know no more about it than an infant baby."

"That you swear?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Then," said George, who was utterly disgusted with the wretch, and felt sure that the testimony of Bull would be abundantly sufficient to convince the jury that the evidence of him who stood before them ought not to be received, "I have no other questions to ask you." And Cavendish went down with the utmost alacrity, delighted at having been so easily let off.

This being the last witness for the prosecution—and the general impression in the court was that he was not the witness of truth—the chairman, it being then half-past-five, proposed that the court should adjourn for an hour in order to obtain some refreshment, and George was accordingly removed from the bar to the prison, in which he partook of a moderate and hasty meal, and made the most of the little time he had in preparing his defence, which he knew he should be called upon to deliver, the very moment the court re-assembled.

It may here be remarked that the chairman, in his haste to adjourn the court for dinner, neglected to swear an officer to take charge of the jury, and to prevent them from holding communication with any save themselves; and that the consequence of this neglect was, that on their way from the court to the tavern at which they dined, Sir Richard, Joseph, and Bounsom, mixed with them, and after having had some conversation together, they seemed to understand each other e tremely well. This good understanding they endeavoured to effect unobserved, but it was noticed by several persons, although the fact was not communicated to George until after the trial.

At seven o clock precisely he was again placed at the bar, and when the jury had been re-sworn, the chairman, addressing George, announced that the time had arrived for him to make his defence. A smile of triumph at this moment was observed to play upon the lips of the

chairman, sufficiently indicative of the feelings within him. However, silence having been proclaimed, George bowed to the chairman, and turning to the jury, addressed them impressively thus:—

"Gentlemen of the Jury: I am now called upon to address you in defence of my liberty and character as a man; but before I advert to those points which form the grounds upon which they have both been assailed, I would submit that the prejudice created against me not only by the numerous placards that have been issued, but by the scandalous aspersions of the public press, in which my name has been constantly associated with swindlers and felons, the high legal talent by which I am opposed, and the anomaly of the law which, while it enables a prosecutor to have counsel to address you, denies that privilege to a prisoner, are difficulties which to a man like myself having neither pretensions to eloquence nor experience in giving public expression to my thoughts, are of no ordinary character; but, gentlemen, they are difficulties which, while I crave your indulgence for the imperfect manner in which I may address you, I trust that I shall have sufficient strength to surmount. —strength derived alike from the consciousness of innocence and faith in the power of justice and truth. I do not, however, appear before you as a suppliant: I ask you for justice alone. My object is not to obtain an acquittal by virtue of flattery on the one hand, and entreaty on the other, but to convince you of my innocence of this crime: for an acquittal, should I fail in this object, would be as much perjury on your part as would a condemnation if I should succeed. You have, gentlemen, heard of my connexion with the actual prosecutor in this case: you have heard that I am married to his only daughter: it is for me to inform you that he has never been reconciled to us since the day of that marriage. Heaven knows that we have done all in our power to effect a reconciliation: Heaven also knows that I became involved in this transaction; that I discounted these two bills of exchange solely in order that a reconciliation might be thereby promoted. Now, gentlemen, there is a person at present in court named Joseph Broadbridge. He is one of the claimants to a certain property: his cousin, whom it is my intention to call before you, is the other. This man, as I have the most direct evidence to prove, employed Tynte to obliterate the entry of a certain marriage, which alone was required to establish his cousin's claim. He knew that this had been discovered by me; that I alone had the means of restoring that entry, and that I supplied the funds necessary to prosecute the suit now pending. This, gentlemen, may at first sight appear to be irrelevant; but I have letters to show that, dreading Tynte on the one hand, and knowing on the other that I had at my command the means of establishing his cousin's claim beyond doubt, he suggested this scheme of obtaining these bills from Sir Richard, in order that he might involve Tynte and myself in destruction, and thereby get rid of us both. As this, however, gentlemen, will presently be more apparent, I will at once proceed to the root of this charge, for the purpose of showing—although I wish not to avail myself of the fact—that the indictment itself cannot stand. Gentlemen, I am indicted for felony—for having received the

bills, knowing them to have been stolen; and in order to support this indictment, there are three distinct points to be established: the first being the crime of stealing; the second, the identity of the thief; and the third, my guilty knowledge. Now I hold, in the first place, stealing to be the taking from another by force or against his consent that which is his; and it is, I believe, admitted in all cases of stealing, that there must be a trespass. Now what are the facts of this case as proved by Sir Richard himself? Why these: Having negociated for the loan of a sum of money by letter, the parties meet with a view of carrying the conditions of that negociation into effect. And where? Not at the house of Sir Richard. No—and therefore he cannot plead surprise—they meet by appointment at a place five miles from his residence; so that in order to be robbed he rode five miles to meet the thief, and that, moreover, for the express purpose of having that effected which he now calls a felony. Well, having met, the alleged thief produces his own stamps, and Sir Richard having previously entered into a contract, positive and defined, accepts the bills, the condition being that he shall receive a sum of money on a certain day, so that in reality he gives credit to the thief. He then hands back, or allows the thief to take back, the stamps thus accepted, expressly for the purpose of enabling that thief to raise money on them. To talk of stealing after this is absurd. What did the alleged thief steal? The stamps were his own property: while not even the ink was the property of Sir Richard, for that belonged to the people at whose house they met It may indeed be alleged that at the time these bills were given there was no intention on the part of him who received them to remit to Sir Richard any part of the proceeds: but this does not prove the act of receiving them to have been a felony. You have from Sir Richard's own lips the clearest possible evidence of a contract and therefore the charge of felony is without the slightest foundation. Sir Richard agreed to give and did give the use of his name on condition that the person to whom he gave it should at a futnre time pay to him a certain sum of money. The fact, therefore, of that condition not being fulfilled proves a breach of contract, but certainly not an act of felony. I now come to the second point, namely, the identity of the thief. What evidence has been adduced to prove that Tynte is the person who represented himself as Mordaunt? Sir Richard, indeed, has sworn that he is the man; but how can he possibly know that the person with whom he corresponded and whom he knew only as Mordaunt is Tynte, when according to his own declaration he has never seen him since? He cannot know, although he has sworn that he does; and I submit that this is a point which ought to be established, and for this reason: I am indicted to day for receiving bills, knowing them to have been stolen by Tynte; to-morrow he may turn round and say, having made a mistake, I must indict you again for receiving the bills, knowing them to have been stolen by Mordaunt.—The third point, gentlemen, is my guilty knowledge. How has this been proved? What particle of proof has been adduced? That perjured man Cavendish has sworn that I received the bills from Tynte—but even

assuming this to be the fact, which it is not, how can he possibly tell that I knew them to have been stolen? Did *he* know that they had been stolen? If he did, it places him in a most unenviable light: but, gentlemen, the only fact from which my guilty knowledge can be inferred, is that of the bills having been in my possession; and if this be deemed a proof of guilty knowledge, why then Mr. Bull, or even the bankers to whom he sent them, may with equal justice be indicted for felony. Thus, gentlemen, I have shown that the stamps were the property of the person who represented himself as Mordaunt; that the fact of Sir Richard's writing upon them did not make them his stamps; that after they had been thus written upon, Mordaunt brought them away with the consent and approbation of Sir Richard; that a contract positive and defined was entered into between them, and that the delivery of these acceptances by Sir Richard to Mordaunt, was his part of that contract; that if Mordaunt were now standing by my side the only charge that could be substantiated against him would be a breach of his portion of that contract; that when the bills were taken away, being accepted in blank, they were of no definite value; that Mordaunt has not been identified in the person of Tynte; that there is no proof that when I received the bills I had any guilty knowledge of the way in which they had been obtained, and that, therefore, the present is no case of felony. Upon these grounds, gentlemen, alone I am intitled to an acquittal; but I have no desire to avail myself of them: my object is to convince you, and thus to convince the world, that my share of this transaction has been perfectly honourable and straightforward: and in order that you may be convinced, I now proceed to explain to you the way in which the bills came into my possession, the chief features of which explanation are about to be proved on oath. On Friday, the 15th of May, Cavendish called at my office, and producing two bills, enquired if I knew the parties, and whether I would cash them. Perceiving that they were accepted by Sir Richard, and fancying that if they were held by me it might lead to a reconciliation, which as a means of increasing the happiness of my wife, I was exceedingly anxious to effect, I consented to cash them: and when Cavendish called at one o'clock the same day, I gave him a cheque for the amount, deducting five per cent., which cheque I now beg to submit to your notice in order to show how much more I gave him than two hundred and fifty pounds, which he has sworn is the amount he received. On the following day he called with two other bills, dated the same day, and for the same amount as those which I had discounted, which I naturally thought strange; but being anxious to possess them all, I desired him—that being Saturday—to call on the Monday, and wrote to Sir Richard by that night's post, to inform him that I had discounted two of the bills, and that two others had been offered which I should be equally happy to discount in the event of his assuring me of the transaction being correct, which letter Sir Richard has this day admitted that he received. No answer was returned; but as I expected one daily, I, in order to have the money ready, got Mr. Bull to pay into his banker's the two first bills with the understanding that I was to have a cheque for the

amount when required. He did so; but on the Wednesday he received a communication to the effect that Sir Richard had been defrauded of those bills. I no sooner heard of this, than I accompanied Mr. Bull to the banker's; and having explained to the entire satisfaction of the principal how they came into my possession, Mr. Bull and I returned to my office, where Cavendish was waiting for an answer respecting the other two bills. I then enquired how they came into his hands, and he answered—In the regular way of business. I asked him whom he received them from, and he replied that he was not then at liberty to say. I then told him that I had received information of their having been fraudulently obtained, and that I therefore expected to have the amount of the cheque I had given him returned; to which he replied, that he knew nothing of it,—that he would go and see about it, and then let me know; but I saw nothing more of him until he was brought to the New Prison on the indictment for conspiracy. All this took place in the presence of Mr. Bull; and you will hence understand why he displayed so much anxiety to assail the character of that gentleman. Knowing him to be the only witness I have that can prove that I had no guilty knowledge of the way in which the bills had been obtained, his object in attacking his reputation was to diminish the weight of his evidence. And now let me revert to the originator of this base conspiracy, Joseph Broadbridge. Gentlemen, no sooner did that man hear from Tynte that I had discounted two of these bills, than he obtained an interview with Richard, whom he had never seen before, and, with a view to my destruction, prevailed upon him to come up to town, and commence proceedings against me forthwith. We had just given notice of motion before the Lord Chancellor, to try the question of the entry of the marriage, and on the application of Broadbridge, that motion was postponed for ten days; he therefore saw that no time was to be lost; and having ascertained that no reconciliation had taken place between Sir Richard and myself, he conceived it to be a fine opportunity for getting me out of the way, and with that view made him his dupe. He had explained to Tynte that my ruin was his object, and promising to protect him, actually gave him an asylum in his own house; but as Tynte soon discovered that his object was to secure him when the time arrived for sacrificing him as well as me, he left the house, and has never since been seen. You will therefore, gentlemen, perceive the whole of the bearings of the case. If you ask yourselves why the man Broadbridge should have moved at all in this prosecution, you will find a ready answer. He knew the revengeful disposition of Sir Richard—he knew him to be especially vindictive towards me; he knew that by working upon his feelings he should prompt him to do all of which he was capable with the view of promoting his own base object, and he has not been deceived. You may, gentlemen, think that I speak with unwarrantable harshness; but when a man has been persecuted as they have persecuted me; when he is publicly denounced as the leader of a gang of swindlers, then accused of forgery, then thrown into prison, then indicted for conspiracy, and then tried for felony as I have been, and

being, as I am, innocent of all, it is enough not only to make him employ bitter words, but to cause him even to close his heart against every kind and charitable feeling. There is nothing, gentlemen, that could be done having a tendency to accomplish my ruin that has been left undone by them. They have strenuously *laboured* to inflict upon me the most grievous injuries that man has the power to inflict upon man. Happily, however, their labour will soon prove to have been in vain, for I now leave the facts of this case for your reconsideration, in the full conviction that justice will prompt you to enable me at once to restore happiness to my home."

During the impressive delivery of this address, both Joseph and Sir Richard were exceedingly restless. They had evidently no expectation of such an address being delivered; they seemed to feel that it had withered every hope they had cherished—that it had grasped so powerfully every point, that the indictment must of necessity fall. On meeting, however, the furtive glance of the chairman, whose complacent smile appeared to them to be utterly inexplicable under the circumstances, they in some degree rallied; and when Bull was called, they reinspired hope, and became again tranquil, for while they knew him to be an extremely nervous man, they had been led to believe their counsel would literally frighten him out of court.

In this they were, however, deceived. Feeling that the safety of George, whom he knew to be perfectly innocent, depended upon his evidence, and knowing it to be absolutely necessary for him to stand forth boldly in defence of his own character, which had been throughout the trial so violently assailed, he, contrary to all expectation, and to the utter surprise of those who had known him for years, and who had felt quite sure that he would be in a dreadful state of excitement, appeared calm and firm.

On mounting the witness-box, however, he turned to George, and instantly burst into tears. He could not for the moment repress them. He entertained towards him the feelings of a father: he viewed him in fact as a son.

To say that George was not touched at this moment were to say that he possessed not the heart of a man. He did feel it deeply. He could firmly bear up against oppression, whatever shape it might assume, but he could not be firm before sympathy's tear.

> "No radiant pearl which crested fortune wears—
> No gem that twinkling hangs from beauty's ears;
> Not the bright stars which night's blue arch adorn,
> Nor rising suns that gild the vernal morn,
> Shine with such lustre as the tear that breaks
> For other's woe down virtue's manly cheeks."

Impressed, however, with a deep sense of the great duty he had to perform, Bull soon became tranquil again, and with firmness during his examination detailed the manner in which he and George became acquainted, the nature of the connexion existing between them, and the various transactions in which they had been engaged; omitting no op-

portunity of placing George's character and conduct in the most favourable light, affirming his conviction that George was utterly incapable of a dishonest or dishonourable act, and declaring that so firm and so unbounded was the confidence he had in his integrity that he would, without the slightest apprehension, intrust to him all that he possessed. He entered minutely into the circumstances connected with George's possession of the bills, explained the readiness with which he accompanied him to the banker's, described all that occurred during their interview with Cavendish, the weight of whose evidence he utterly destroyed, and boldly denounced both the wily Joseph and Sir Richard his miserable dupe.

Of course he underwent a searching cross-examination by the counsel for the prosecution, but the old man firmly passed through the ordeal unscathed; not a particle of his evidence could be shaken, and as he smiled at George to cheer him on leaving the box, applauding murmurs filled the court.

The next witness called was Fred. He of course could give no direct evidence on the subject of the bills, but he substantiated all those collateral points which George had been so anxious to establish. He was, however, extremely pale and tremulous, and when speaking of the kindness, the noble generosity of George, the tears trickled fast down his cheeks: in fact, his feelings so completely overcame him, that he was eventually carried senseless out of the court.

Several other witnesses were then called by George, among whom was the curate, whom the counsel for the prosecution extremely puzzled; but the effect of his evidence, as well as that of the rest, was to show that George was a straightforward, honourable man, who would scorn to commit the crime for which he then stood indicted.

The witnesses for the defence having given their evidence, the counsel for the prosecution rose to reply. He stated that he had listened to the address delivered by the prisoner with mingled feelings of pity and disgust; that he had before no idea that any creature having the semblance of a man, could be found with sufficient audacity to address a jury of his countrymen—composed of twelve highly intellectual men in a style so presumptuous, illogical, and absurd; that all his reasoning was false, all his premises baseless; that he evidently imagined the jury to be absolute idiots and fools—than which nothing could be a more unpardonable insult; that he sought to screen Tynte, who, according to his own admission, was steeped to the lips in infamy and crime; and that the greatest proof that could by possibility be afforded of the prisoner's villany and blackness of heart, was the fact of his having laboured to blast the reputation of the father of his own wife.

"Look at the felon," said he, "look at him. Has he aught about him to lead you to believe that he is any thing but that which the respectable witnesses for the prosecution have described? Has he the appearance of an honourable man? Does he not look like what he is—the leader of a band of atrocious ruffians—the acknowledged prince of swindlers?"

George here appealed to the chairman, but that gentleman in answer

to that appeal, stated that the liberty of the advocate he ever had, and ever would maintain.

"Oh! let the galled jade *wince!*" continued the counsel for the prosecution; "and much it delights me to find that he writhes beneath the infliction of the lash of truth. It convinces me that during the period which is about to be assigned for the expiation of his innumerable offences, he will see the necessity for repentance, and become a better man. Heaven grant that he may yet be reformed, that he may yet do all in his power to make atonement for his crimes! You have, gentlemen, all of you heard of Poyais: you have heard of the misery, the wretchedness, endured by the victims of the atrocious Poyais speculation: but, gentlemen, you have not heard that this very man—this prisoner now standing with an unblushing front at the bar, was the actual originator of that execrable project; and yet, gentlemen, such is the fact. It is he who conceived that infamous scheme—it is he who had the heart to carry it into execution: it is he who induced with golden promises hundreds of poor men, women, and children to leave their native land, to leave all that was dear to them on earth to inhabit a desolate island—a perilous swamp, where disease and death yawned to receive them. Look, gentlemen, I beseech you, at the frightful accounts received from these miserable victims of avarice: behold their appalling condition; picture to your mind's eye a scene in which hundreds of our poor fellow-creatures lie groaning on the brink of starvation, without the slightest prospect of relief, without hope, save in Him whom they pray to for death, and then turn to the prisoner at the bar—the cause of all their calamities—the wretch, who for his own aggrandisement thus plunged them into misery—and say, if as Christians, as fathers, as husbands, as men, you can feel yourselves justified in letting him loose upon society again to pursue his atrocious career."

Again George appealed to the chairman, again he represented the heartless injustice of the course which the counsel was pursuing, but the chairman still refused to interfere.

"Gentlemen," pursued the counsel for the prosecution, "you perceive the effect of an unvarnished statement of facts; you perceive the effect of unpolished truth upon the prisoner at the bar Is it for a moment to be supposed, I ask, gentlemen—is it for a moment to be admitted to be possible that if he were really an innocent man he could be capable of feeling these just observations so acutely? No, gentlemen; innocence is so shielded that truth cannot wound it: innocence and truth are akin. But his object has been the suppression of truth, but in this case that object shall not be attained. I have, gentlemen, thus proved, I am convinced, to your entire satisfaction, that the prisoner at the bar is guilty of the crime with which he is charged. I have proved that, on becoming acquainted with the heavy misfortunes of his own wife's father—who in the county in which he resides is held by all to be the pattern of amiability and benevolence—he basely, heartlessly, infamously sought to complete his ruin by robbing him, or rather by causing him to be robbed of the very means by which he hoped that that ruin might be averted. If, therefore, you believe that such a man is fit

to remain in this country; if you believe that he ought to continue thus to plunder the unfortunate—to prey upon innocence and worth, and to involve the inexperienced in destruction, you will acquit him; but if you feel—and from the intelligence you have displayed, and the high respectability of the stations which you occupy, I am convinced that you do feel—that such a man ought not to be permitted to pursue his iniquitous career, you will return the only verdict which justice can prompt you to return—namely, a verdict of 'Guilty.'"

The jury here looked at each other and evidently felt quite confused; but the chairman immediately began to sum up, and they then, of course, turned their attention to him. In the first place he adverted to the affidavit which George had made to the effect that he could scarcely hope to have in that court a fair trial, and soon induced the jury to believe, that although the charge appeared to be aimed at him, it was in reality levelled at them. He then alluded to the alleged incompetency of that court to decide the various points of commercial law which had been raised, and distinctly put it to them, whether they felt themselves incompetent to understand and to decide any one of those points. "If, gentlemen," said he, "you do feel that incompetency—if you are conscious of the existence among yourselves of that ignorance which the prisoner at the bar indirectly ascribes to you—speak. But really, gentlemen, this, in my judgment, is a case which might be satisfactorily decided by men far less intelligent than yourselves. I cannot see any serious difficulty to surmount. The case appears to me to be but a commonplace one: while every point seems to be perfectly plain. Indeed I see no points upon which a doubt can be entertained, and I am therefore at a loss to conceive the real object of the prisoner in endeavouring to induce the belief that we are incapable of understanding, and incompetent to decide them. But the prisoner seems to have various crochets in his head, which—and I am sure you will agree with me, gentlemen,—it would have been better had he repudiated before he entered this court: he appears to pride himself upon them—to depend almost solely upon their virtue—but on reflection, I am sure he will see that they are not worthy of his attachment."

He then proceeded to recapitulate minutely those parts of the evidence which tended to place George in an unfavourable light. He alluded to the "obstinacy of the prisoner" in insisting on the conduct of his defence, instead of yielding to the judgment of his counsel, who was so much more capable of doing justice to it; and instanced the effect of this obstinacy by stating, that at a particular part of the trial, had the case been in the hands of his counsel, he would have insisted on the acquittal of the prisoner, it having been sworn that the filling up of the bills was in the prisoner's handwriting, which would have made him a principal; whereas, in the indictment, he was only stated to be an accessory after the fact,—a receiver of the bills, knowing them to have been stolen. In alluding to the evidence of Cavendish, he admitted that he had disgraced himself, but declared that the chief points of his evidence affecting the prisoner had not been shaken; and that although upon some portion of it a doubt had been raised by

the witness Bull, who had been so mixed up in the various speculations in which the prisoner had been engaged, he would leave the jury to decide what weight they would attach to the evidence of that witness. He then dwelt upon the probable inducement the prisoner might have to obtain revenge against Sir Richard, in consequence of his having discarded his daughter. "He appears," said he, "to be an extremely benevolent, kind hearted man; but incensed beyond measure at the conduct of the prisoner, in having, as he firmly believed, seduced his only child, his wounded honour warring against his natural feelings as a parent, evidently induced him to act as he did. It has been stated that attempts on the part of the prisoner have been made to effect a reconciliation, and I have not the smallest doubt of that statement being correct; but then the prisoner and his witnesses have endeavoured to show that the fact of those atrempts having been unsuccessful, proves Sir Richard to be a tyrannous and most vindictive man; and thereby to induce you, gentlemen, to believe that the only motive which prompted him to promote this prosecution was that of revenge. Now it is not for me to stand forth in defence of his conduct: it is not for me to attempt here a vindication of his character; but which of you, gentlemen, would feel under the circumstances justified in becoming reconciled to any man with such a reputation as that which the prisoner has acquired? Which of you could, with any regard to your own character, associate with one who had obtained such a degree and such a species of notoriety? You could not do it; you dare not do it: that desire which is implanted in the breast of every virtuous person would prompt you to stand aloof lest such an association should render you equally notorious. You dare not do it therefore in justice to yourselves as men—but when to this natural indisposition to be supposed by the world to countenance a man with such a reputation, you add the poignant feelings of a deeply-injured father,—you cannot feel surprised at his being under those circumstances inexorable. You will perceive, therefore, gentlemen, that this attempt on the part of the prisoner and his witnesses to prove that, because Sir Richard, possessing the feelings of a wounded father, and being justly apprehensive of being supposed by the world to countenance the acts of one who had acquired so unenviable a reputation—refused to associate with him, he has been actuated in this prosecution by the spirit of revenge, has most signally failed."

And thus he proceeded without touching a single point upon which he ought to have dwelt.

The jury then retired; and having been absent half an hour, returned, and when silence had been proclaimed, pronounced a verdict of GUILTY.

The very instant this verdict—which seemed to throw almost every one in court into a state of amazement the most intense—had been pronounced, Sir Richard started from his seat, and with a fiendlike smile of satisfaction, stared at George as if his eyes were about to start from their spheres, with the view of conveying to him an idea of the happiness with which he then felt inspired. This, however, passed

almost unnoticed, for at the time the whole body of the court was in a state of agitation, while murmurs of disapprobation swelled into a groan.

This natural expression of indignation having eventually been checked, the chairman addressed George as follows:

"Prisoner at the bar—you have been convicted after a lengthened and impartial trial by an intelligent and patient jury of your countrymen, of the crime of felony, and I am sure that no person who has heard the whole of the evidence can entertain a doubt of your guilt. From the evidence adduced, it is very apparent that yours has been a long career of crime. You have taken advantage of the speculative spirit of the age to lead hundreds to their ruin, and in one particular instance you have left your unhappy and too confiding dupes to die of poverty and disease in a foreign land. Avarice has been your God—it has tempted you on from crime to crime, until at length you have been induced to take advantage of the age and misfortunes of one who, being the father of your wife, it was your duty to protect and to succour. It has been clearly proved in evidence that you planned one of the foulest conspiracies that ever disgraced human nature, and combined with a set of men equally worthless with yourself to prey on the necessities of the unfortunate. You have thereby reduced your wife—whom all must pity—to a state of utter destitution, for it is hardly to be expected that her situation will be relieved by her father, whom you have so grossly, so heartlessly wronged."

At the description of poor Julia's destitution the audience sobbed aloud, it being evident that the object of the chairman was to increase George's misery by alluding to "the *situation*" of his wife; and having gone on in this strain for nearly half an hour, harrowing George's feelings in every possible way, he concluded by saying, "The sentence of the court is, that you be transported beyond the seas for the term of fourteen years, to such place as His Majesty, by the advice of his privy counsel, may think proper to appoint and direct."

During the passing of this sentence, and more particularly while allusion was being made to the destitute and forlorn situation of his Julia, it was evident to all that George was sinking. He clung convulsively to the rails of the bar for support, while he seemed choked with agony; and when the sentence had been passed he fell senseless into the arms of the officer, who carried him from the bar to one of the cells beneath the court, while the chairman assumed the air of a man conscious of having completed his duty.

CHAPTER XXX.

GEORGE IN NEWGATE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the agony consequent on the heartless address of the chairman, and the exhaustion induced by the excessive heat of the court, George on being removed soon rallied; but the idea of his strength having failed at the last moment—the thought of his having developed on hearing his sentence, those feelings from which conscious guilt might be inferred—afflicted him more than even the sentence itself. He could scarcely bear to think of it: he could not but hold it to be an unpardonable exhibition of weakness, albeit to those who consider his position—standing then perfectly innocent in the character of a convict, being denounced as an atrocious and unnatural villain, and having his very heart-strings torn by allusions to her whom he tenderly loved, in the solemn phraseology of judicial sympathy—it will not appear strange that nature at last should have failed to sustain him.

He did not however despair even then; he still felt convinced, that notwithstanding his position was one of extreme peril, he should eventually triumph, and that conviction restored his moral strength, and enabled him to bear up with firmness against impending ruin

But that firmness he could not impart to his three faithful friends, Bull, Fred, and the Curate. They accompanied him back to the prison in tears: their hearts were full of sorrow, and they trembled. Bull sobbed like a child, and on taking leave of George at the gate, he convulsively grasped both his hands, and having kissed them, exclaimed in tremulous tones, "God bless you!—God bless you! my boy!—all, all shall yet be well! It *shall!* I know your innocence! I know it!—and the world shall know it too. If it cost fifty thousand pounds I'll prove it!—It shall be done!—I'll do it!—I will."

"My good old friend," returned George, "I cannot express to you that which I feel—but Julia," he added, as the tears gushed from his eyes, "tell her, my kind friend, tell her that even now I do not despair! Cheer her!—comfort her!—God be with her, and with you all."

He had the power to say no more: he again shook them warmly by the hand, and the gates of the prison were the next moment closed.

To them this parting was a source of deep affliction, but the duty they had yet to perform, namely, that of communicating the intelligence to Julia, was more afflicting still. They knew not how to commence while they dreaded its effect in whatever light they might make it appear; but although they felt ready to sink with exhaustion, they resolved to assume as sanguine an aspect as they could, and having entered a coach repaired to George's residence forthwith.

Julia had been with difficulty prevailed upon to keep from the court, and although various notes had been dispatched during the day with

the view of subduing her apprehensions, her anxiety towards night became painfully intense. She and Helen were at the window when the coach drew up and they flew to the door in an instant, and strained their eyes to catch a glimpse of him whose appearance would have inspired them with joy.

The door of the coach was opened, and Fred alighted, and gave his arm to Bull, who immediately approached Julia and took her hand.

"George—George!" cried Julia tremblingly, "where—where is George?"

"He—he—can't return to-night," replied Bull, who could scarcely articulate.

"But the trial? the result? What is the result of the trial?"

"My dear creature: be calm—I'll explain all—come."

"But tell me, pray tell me at once! I can bear it! say, are my worst fears realized?"

"No, by no means."

"Thank God!—thank God!—then the trial is not over yet?"

"Why—yes—the trial is over."

"The trial over!—and he not here!—pray do not trifle with my feelings? I am on the rack! What *is* the result?"

"My dear soul, the result of this persecution is not yet known."

"But the verdict?"

"Why the verdict is *nominally* against him."

"Against him! Guilty?

In an instant her countenance became pale as death; her eyes rolled wildly, her lips were livid; big drops of cold sweat sprang from her brow, and she fell into his arms like a corse.

"I foresaw this," said Bull, as he placed her upon a couch, while tears filled the eyes of all save Mrs. Julian, whose grief was too intense to allow her to weep, and who stood as if unconscious of all that was passing, "I foresaw this, I knew that it would go to her heart."

"Heaven have mercy upon her," exclaimed the curate, "and grant her strength to endure this great calamity with christian fortitude."

Bull, almost blinded with tears, now approached Mrs. Julian, and led her with the assistance of Fred and the Curate in silence from the room, while Helen and the servants were administering restoratives to Julia, whose spirit appeared to have fled.

"My dear madam," said Bull, having taken a seat beside her, "you do not understand me. All, all will be well! Nothing has occurred to induce us to despair. George does not despair. I do not despair. None can despair. We are all full of hope—the most lively hope! Come, hear me explain."

Mrs. Julian looked at him earnestly for a moment, and a flood of tears came to her relief, when he laboured zealously to induce her to believe that George, although he then stood convicted, would soon have his innocence proved; and in this, with the aid of the curate and Fred, he succeeded so far as to cause hope to spring from her fears.

Poor Julia, however, was seen no more by them that night. On being sufficiently restored, she was removed to her chamber; and when

Bull had impressed upon Mrs. Julian and Helen, that they would be justified in assuring her of George's perfect safety, he left them to cheer her with that assurance, and with a heavy heart proceeded home, accompanied by Fred.

In the morning, after having passed a truly wretched night, George was visited by the governor of the prison, who had received an imperative order for his immediate removal to Newgate.

"I am sorry, Mr. Julian," said he, having delicately exhibited the order, "I am really grieved for you, but I must do my duty. I will however, perform it with as little offence as possible. You shall have a coach from the gate, and I will myself go with you and recommend you to Mr. Wontner, who is really a kind-hearted man."

George pressed his hand warmly and thanked him: he had always been treated by him with marked consideration, and in consequence felt extremely grateful.

There was, however, one part of the governor's duty the performance of which caused a bitter pang. Previously to the removal of every prisoner, after conviction, to Newgate, it was the custom to affix what is termed a "basil"—a slight iron ring—round his ancle; and during the process of attaching this basil to the ancle of George, he, in spite of himself shuddered; while the big tears rolled down his cheeks—for the iron indeed seemed to enter his soul!

All being now in readiness, George and the governor walked to the outer gate; but no sooner did they make their appearance there, than George was assailed by a set of hired wretches with groans and yells of a most unearthly character; while Sir Richard and Joseph, by whom the ruffians were led, lavished upon him the vilest epithets that ever proceeded from human lips.

"Shame!" exclaimed the governor, having entered the coach with George. "Shame!—monsters!"

"The Prince!" cried Sir Richard,—"the Prince—the felon Prince!"

"Drive on!" shouted the governor; and as the coachman obeyed, they were followed as far as the Green by the mob, who filled the air with most terrific groans.

"I have seen, Mr. Julian," observed the governor, when they had got quite clear of the crowd, "I have seen, sir, many bad fellows in my time, but I never in my life saw a man so revengeful as that precious father-in-law of yours. He looks like what he is. I am sure that he's a bitter, brutal, black-hearted man. But cheer up, Mr. Julian! Don't let the beastly bellowings of a mob of uncivilized wretches depress you! When we get a little farther, we'll have a glass of wine. It'll raise your spirits: come—don't be downhearted!"

"I cannot but feel it," said George, "the thought of being thus pursued by that man, whom I never in my life injured, but whom, on the contrary, I have endeavoured to conciliate and to serve, is dreadful."

"It is, it is; I know it is. It seems to me to be a villanous piece of business altogether; but if you urge the point that was mentioned this

morning—about the separation of the jury, you know—I feel sure you'll get over it now."

"But how can I prove the fact? I must not call upon *you* to give evidence!"

"Now I'll tell you what it is, Mr. Julian: I am not much in the habit of professing friendship to those who are placed in my custody, because I've very few indeed that are not scamps, but so certain am I that you are of a different sort—so convinced do I feel that you are innocent of this business—that if my evidence were necessary to save you I should feel myself bound to come forward without the least regard to the injury I might thereby inflict upon myself; but as it isn't necessary for me to appear—as there are many who can prove it without injuring themselves—it would be hardly worth while for me to run into ruin when there's no occasion for it at all: do you understand?"

"Perfectly."

"For instance, you can call upon the chairman; you can call upon the whole bench of magistrates, you can call upon the officers of the court; nay, you can even call upon the jury themselves to deny it if they can. So that you see you have at least fifty witnesses who can swear to the fact, and whose evidence cannot injure them in the slighest degree. But come," he added, pulling the check-string, "we are getting very near: you shall have a glass of wine before you go in, to revive you"

As the coach stopped at the door of a tavern in Smithfield, the governor ordered a pint of sherry to be brought to them, for which he insisted upon paying, and when they had drank it, with many expressions of good feeling, they proceeded in silence to Newgate.

The feelings of George, as he entered the gate, which opened into a sort of lodge, the walls of which were hung with fetters, were distressing in the extreme; but the governor again tried to cheer him, and introduced him with much kindness to Mr. Wontner, who however, failed to show any marked consideration for him then, for he ordered him, with what appeared to be unnecessary promptitude, into the transport yard, in which he was soon surrounded by about fifty convicts, who had been sentenced to various periods of transportation.

They had all heard of George: they had expected him that morning, and that which recommended him to them was the conviction of his being guilty of the very crimes of which he was innocent: they therefore hailed him as the "Prince," and were delighted with his appearance: they regarded him as a fine, bold, noble, dashing fellow, which he could not in their view, by any possibility have been had they believed him for an instant to have been free from crime.

At first, George took but little notice of them—for they were all reckless, desperate men, while the countenances of the majority of them were indicative of the most brutal ferocity—but they continued to treat him with so much respect, and appeared to be so anxious to administer to his comforts, that he soon felt unable to regard them with anything bearing the semblance of contempt, and more especially as he found

that with every little act of what they deemed condescension on his part, they were delighted as highly as courtiers are when their sovereign deigns to smile.

It being known that morning that on the following night the most desperate of these men were to be removed to the dock yards, a plan of escape had been conceived; and in the course of the day George was drawn aside by one whom the rest seemed to treat with much respect, and who explained to him their object without the smallest reserve.

"A lot of us," said he, "are booked for to morrow night, and we don't want to go; and as there isn't half a chance at the blessed hulks, you know, we don't ought to throw an opportunity away."

"But have you," inquired George, "an opportunity of escaping from this place."

"A capital one! an out and outer! And we mean for to do it too this blessed night. Why shouldn't we, eh? What's the use of going to an unpleasant place when there's no occasion for it."

"But how can the escape be effected?"

"I'll tell you. In the first place, we mean for to get up the chimney, and then to get out upon the leads, and then to let ourselves down into the street, and then to cut away."

"Well, certainly that's all straightforward enough," said George, "but do you anticipate no opposition."

"Oh, that's all arranged. There's certainly bars all up the blessed chimney; but they have all been loosened: there's a blessed watchman likewise planted upon the leads, but then he's to be silenced."

"By bribes?"

"Not a bit of it.—Silenced."

"What, murdered?"

"Murdered ain't the word. How can you talk about such a man as that in such a case being murdered? Would he mind killing any one of us, do you think, if he had the chance of catching us out upon the leads? Wouldn't he do so as soon as look at us? Very well then: why shouldn't we do the same to him which he wouldn't stand nice about doing to us? It wouldn't be murder in his case!—why should it in ours? Ain't one man's life as dear to him as another? But we wouldn't hurt a hair of his head if he wouldn't interfere, but as he's safe to do that, why of course he must be silenced."

"He is armed, I presume?"

"Of course: he has a cutlass and a blunderbuss."

"Which, the moment he fires it off, will alarm the whole prison."

"Yes, yes, ay! but stop a bit: we don't mean to let him have the chance!"

"How are you to prevent it?"

"I'll tell you. In the first place we have cast lots to decide which goes up the chimney first. In the next place, there's a tank upon the leads which supplies the whole prison with water. Very well. Now, as the watchman is an out and out giant to tackle—one who could dash either of us into the yard again and think nothing of it—the plan is for Bill Johnson, the swell who goes first, to wait in the pot till

the watchman who walks near the tank, gets as close to the edge as possible, and then to creep behind and push him quietly in. Once there, of course he don't get out again in a hurry: he's safe to be drowned; so that Bill can at once give the signal and up we all go! Eh? what do think of that?"

"But when you reach the leads how do you mean to descend into the street?"

"Oh! that's all arranged. We could do it with blankets alone if we liked, but there'll be lots of crack fellows outside to assist us. I'll tell you now how they mean to manage it: they mean to tie a stone to one end of a piece of twine and a good strong rope to the other, and when they've thrown up the stone and we've hauled up the rope, all we have to do is for to make that rope fast and to slip down with all the regularity of life. Don't you see? Isn't it capital? I'll tell you what I'll do now: as you are an out-and outer, I'll undertake to say that you shall be the first man to go down!"

"But I have no wish to make my escape."

"No wish! Well, may I! No wish to escape! Well, if ever I heard anything to come half way up to that. Do you then want fourteen years of it? You very great swells have rum notions I know, but do you think it would do you any good? Do you think you should like it? If you do, I can only tell you this, you were never in your life more mistaken. You don't know what it is and I pity your ignorance. I do know what it is—worse luck!—and I'll tell you, candidly, I never did and never shall like it; and, therefore, if you take a friend's advice, you wont try it until you are actually forced. Mark my words, it's no treat: therefore don't be ambitious."

"My ambition," said George, who could not repress a smile, although his heart was indeed sad, "does not point in that direction, if it did I should expect to pay the price of it; but I assure you that if I could escape without one-half the trouble of climbing up a chimney: nay, if every gate in this prison were open, and I could pass out this night without the slightest opposition, I'd suffer death rather than do it."

"Well, then, all I can say about the matter is this,—you and I have very different notions of propriety! But I can't understand you! You say you're not ambitious of being transported, and then you say in the same breath, you've no wish to escape! I should just like to know how you make these ends meet."

"I've no wish to be transported," replied George, "because that, as you justly observe, would be unpleasant: I have, on the other hand, no wish to escape, because, putting aside every other consideration I fully expect to be discharged."

"Don't trust to it! Take the advice of a friend and don't think of running any such risk for a moment. If you depend upon that you depend upon a rotten stick; mark my words. But what put such a rum idea into your head? What made you think of being discharged?"

"The mere fact of my being innocent of the crime of which I have been convicted."

"Well, that's regular out and out! Innocent! Suppose you are in-

nocent, what's the odd's of that? What is innocence; and what is crime? I like to argue on that blessed point. What, I ask, is innocence? Nothing. What is crime? Anything. Any thing the nobs like to christen crime is crime, and anything that they like to say isn't, isn't. What's crime in one country ain't crime in another. Crime is nothing at all more than an offence against the laws; and what are the laws? Of course just what the nobs like to make them. Isn't it monstrous that they should have so much power? There wants, sir, a sweeping reform of the laws: a reform that'll sweep them all away. I'm for every man doing the best he can for himself, and the laws that oppose him are clean against liberty."

George did not, of course, presume to answer this profoundly philosophical argument; but being anxious to prevent the commission of murder, reverted to the subject of the escape.

"Do you really then intend to drown the watchman!" he inquired.

"Of course; the thing can't be done in any other way! How can it? He's sure to interfere if we give him a chance, and nothing could please him better than the opportunity of blowing out the brains of the first man that springs from the pot. What's the odds then of drowning such a fellow as that? Is such a man fit to live? Not a bit of it. But of course you are only joking when you say that you don't want to make your escape?"

"No, I'm perfectly serious."

"But consider how unpleasant, how lonely it will be to be left here alone! Come, go with us; make up your mind."

"It is made up already."

"That you will *not* go?"

"That I will not go."

"Then," said the fellow turning from him indignantly, "you're not the man I took you for."

Nor was he; for having satisfied himself that the whole of the preparations described had in reality been made, he had an interview with the governor, to whom he explained—without pointing out any particular party—that an escape accompanied by murder had been planned, and the consequence was that immediate and effectual steps were taken to frustrate the design.

George was then removed to the infirmary where he was constantly visited by Fred and the curate, who were the only friends he wished to see, able to come, Bull and Julia being utterly prostrate.

CHAPTER XXXI.

IN WHICH TYNTE IS CAPTURED.

THE first step taken by George, with the view of establishing his innocence, was to lay the whole case before the attorney and solicitor-general for their opinion. This he did not as his own case nominally; but as the case of A prosecuted by B; and the result was that both those gentlemen decided,—1. That no felony had been committed; 2. That the refusal on the part of the chairman to reserve the points started, for the opinion of the judges, was not law; 3. That the separation of the jury during the trial was illegal; and that, therefore, the conviction was bad.

Armed with this opinion, George prepared a memorial to the crown, embodying the whole of the facts of the case, and claiming as a right an immediate discharge. This he sent to the Home Office, and waited anxiously for several days; but no answer was returned. He then drew up another memorial, and having sent it, waited several days longer when as even the receipt of it had not been acknowledged, Fred called at the Home Office, and was with characteristic flippancy informed that his lordship—the home secretary who had had several interviews with the chairman, and whose mind had by that worthy person been poisoned—declined to interfere.

George now saw that the only chance left for him was to appeal to the conductors of the public press, and through them to public justice. He therefore wrote several letters to the editors of the various London papers—for which every facility was then afforded—setting forth the real facts arguing upon every point involved, embodying the opinion of the attorney and solicitor-general, and proving as clearly as the thing could be proved, that he had been most unjustly convicted.

With a promptitude and spirit which reflected great credit upon the gentlemen who had the conduct of those journals, these letters were inserted, and not only inserted, but dwelt upon day after day in leading articles until the case filled the public mind, and formed one of the chief topics of discussion.

Again George memorialised the crown, but the very day on which that memorial was despatched, he indirectly received information of the fact of his name being down to be removed to the Hulks!

With the view of ascertaining if this information were correct, Fred immediately started for the office of the superintendent of convicts, but as on his arrival he found the office closed, he returned in a fever of excitement to George, who was then and who continued to be throughout the night in a state of mind bordering upon madness.

In the mean time poor Julia had in some degree recovered from the effects of the shock induced by the intelligence of George's conviction; indeed, on hearing that his immediate removal was apprehended—for she had earnestly prayed that nothing might be concealed from her

then—she felt her strength so much increased that at even the hazard of her life she resolved to accompany Fred in the morning.

In the morning accordingly, although extremely weak, she and Helen went with Fred to the superintendent's office, and having inquired whether the name of George were down to be removed, they were informed with much kindness of manner that the name had been down, but that the Secretary of State had ordered it to be erased.

The feelings with which this information inspired Julia are indescribable. Her eyes sparkled brilliantly, and her heart leaped for joy: hope sprang up refreshed from the depths of despair, and for the time being rendered her perfectly happy. She was certain that this erasure was but the prelude to his discharge: she was sure of it!—nothing then could have shaken her conviction that George would be restored to her still.

"Let us hasten," she cried, on leaving the office, "to that dreadful prison with this happy news He is saved," she added, as tears of joy sprang into her eyes, "I know that he is saved."

As Fred, without giving the matter a thought, had discharged the coach in which they came, and as neither that nor any other vehicle was at hand, they walked on; but they had not proceeded far when Helen uttered a scream, and in an instant Fred sprang at the throat of him who had induced it, and held him with the grasp of a giant. It was Tynte!—and the efforts he made to escape were almost superhuman.

"Let me go!" he cried, "Oh! let me go!—I have never injured you!—let me go!"

"Not while I have life!" exclaimed Fred, "not while I have life." And bringing him to the ground, he knelt upon his chest, and thus rendered him utterly powerless.

A crowd soon collected of course, and many truly English persons—feeling bound to take the part of the weak against the strong without reference to reason or to justice, cried "Shame! Do you want to murder the man? Let him get up! Shame! Shame!"—and were about to attempt a rescue, when Fred exclaimed "An officer! A reward of two hundred pounds has been offered for the apprehension of this man, and he shall have my share who first brings me an officer!"

In an instant—like Englishmen—they who had before been most anxious to effect a rescue started off, and an officer, surrounded by them all—for they were all resolved to claim the reward—soon arrived.

"This is Tynte," cried Fred! "Horatio Oswald Tynte! I charge him with felony!—secure him!"

The officer had heard of Tynte before, and he knew of the reward: he therefore held him with unexampled tightness, while Fred placed Julia and Helen in a coach, and desired the coachman to follow, when Tynte was marched off to a secure place at hand, wherein he was safely locked up.

Fred had no sooner satisfied the authorities on the subject of Tynte's

identity, and given them all necessary information, than he rejoined Julia and Helen, whose excitement was then at the highest pitch, and ordered the coachman to drive to the Old Bailey.

"Thank Heaven, we have caught him at last!" exclaimed Fred. "But," he added, addressing Julia, "pray do not go in with me now? You are excited: Mr. Julian is excited; and pleasurable as it is to be the bearer of good news, I must beg of you to forego that pleasure both for your own sake and his. The meeting will I am sure be under the circumstances more than either of you can bear, and may endanger by delay that for which we are most anxious, and to which every other consideration should give place. Let me first alone receive my instructions, and then I'll lead you to him."

"You are right:" returned Julia, "quite right. We will remain in the coach until you have seen him and decided upon the course to be pursued. I would not cause a moment's delay for the world."

On reaching the Old Bailey, Fred accordingly left them, and proceeded to the infirmary of the prison, where he found George engaged in writing to one of the sheriffs.

"I have news for you," said he, as he approached him, "great news! Tynte is taken!"

"Tynte taken?" echoed George, whose countenance on the instant brightened up. "Then I am safe. But are you sure—quite sure?"

"I captured him myself!"

"You have given me new life: I breathe freely again. But how—tell me all—how was it? Where is he now?"

Fred explained; and never did an explanation cause more delight. Hope reigned in the ascendant again; nay, he felt already free.

"Let Sir Richard know of it," said he; "inform also that infamous cousin of yours; send messengers to them both. I would not compass the ruin of even such a man as Tynte; but let them know that he has been captured: let him be tried: he is sure to be acquitted, and my discharge must of necessity follow. Go, my dear boy; go, lose not a moment."

"One word more," said Fred, lingering.

"What is it? Out with it at once."

"Mrs. Julian—"

"Yes! what of her? what has happened? Speak!"

"Nothing—nothing has happened: she and Helen are now in a coach outside."

George, whose full heart had ceased to beat with apprehension, breathed again.

"Oh!" said he, with a heavy sigh, "you filled me with alarm. And she is better, much better? I thank God for that! Bring her to me, Fred; go, there's a dear boy: why did she not come in with you?"

Leaving this question to be answered anon, Fred left him, and quickly returned with his charge, who trembled dreadfully when, on entering the prison, the fetters and bars met her view.

"My Julia!" exclaimed George, clasping her to his heart, "my poor girl! my own dear love!"

Julia sobbed convulsively, and nestled in his breast without the power to utter a word.

"It is sad, my sweet girl," he continued, after a pause, during which he kissed her fondly again and again, "it is indeed sad to meet in a place like this; but already black infamy and falsehood are yielding to the power of justice and truth. The night of despair has passed, my Julia; the morning of hope has dawned. Heaven will not desert us, my poor girl!—Heaven will not desert us!

"I do not despair, dear George," said Julia, "I am happy—very happy—in the conviction that we have now ample reason to hope. I am sure—quite sure—that you will soon be restored to me! Bless you!" she added, throwing her arms round his neck, and gazing at him with the purest affection, "you are dearer, far dearer than ever to me! Were I to lose you—"

"Do not think of it, do not even dream of it, Julia! Believe that truth will triumph still: believe that we shall again be happy."

"I do, dear George, indeed I do. I fondly, firmly, religiously believe it. Heaven in its mercy grant that nothing may now occur to shake that belief! But oh, what agony must you have endured!"

"I have been, my love, sustained by the consciousness of innocence: I never knew what it was to despair until I heard that they were about to remove me. But I suppose Fred has from time to time told you all. He is a good fellow—all heart!—I know not, I am sure, what I should have done without him."

"He is indeed a dear kind creature; but I feel that his kindness has induced him to keep the knowledge of many things from me."

"I do not know," said George, "that anything has happened which need be concealed from you now, my love. Shall I explain all myself?"

Julia begged of him to do so, and he related every circumstance that had occurred since his conviction, reminding her constantly, as he proceeded, that their troubles were receding, and that they had still the prospect of happiness in view.

Helen, during the whole of this time, sat in silence; she wept, indeed, for the scene she had witnessed affected her deeply; but she did not join in the conversation until Fred returned with the intelligence that the officer to whom he had given information, in the first instance, had been with Sir Richard and Joseph, who, with Bounsom, their attorney, were to appear against Tynte when the magistrates sat in the evening.

"I understand," added Fred, "that Sir Richard is determined to go on with the prosecution, and that Joseph declares that if it cost him five thousand pounds he'll procure a conviction."

"I'm glad of it: right glad," cried George, "Let them try, he is sure to be acquitted. But be at the office, Fred, there's a dear boy: do not fail to be at the office, or to let me as soon as possible know the result?"

"Depend upon me."

"I do Fred: I do."

It was then suggested that as the day was far advancing, Fred should accompany Julia and Helen home, which, when they had taken leave of George, who inspired them with additional confidence in the safety of his position—he did, and after having partaken of a hasty meal he and the Curate, who had been anxiously waiting their return, went to hear the examination of Tynte.

On entering the office they found that the magistrates had not arrived, but Sir Richard and Joseph, with Mr. Bounsom and a stout person who looked like a respectable witness in a horse case, ready to swear to anything, either in or out of nature, were waiting with the utmost impatience.

The magistrates, however, did not keep them long, and when they ha taken their seats, Tynte was placed at the bar.

"That's the man," cried Sir Richard, in an earnest but subdued tone to Bounsom, "I could pick him out of a million, and swear that he's the man."

Mr. Bounsom then solemnly stated the case, and exhibited the warrant for Tynte's apprehension, and when his identity had been sufficiently sworn to, the magistrates making short work of it, committed him at once to take his trial on the indictment.

Fred and the Curate then immediately left the office, and having entered a coach, proceeded to communicate the result of the examination to George, whom they found in conversation with one of the sheriffs.

"Is he committed?" inquired George, as they entered the infirmary.

"He is," replied Fred, "to take his trial on the indictment."

"Then," said George, addressing the sheriff, "since you as a lawyer admit that the law laid down by the chairman was unsound, and that therefore a conviction ought not to have taken place, you will feel yourself, I am sure at least justified in doing me this favour. The mere fact of my name having been erased from the book of the superintendent, I regard as no security against my being sent away at an hour's notice. It may have been done to allow the excitement produced by this case to subside: I do not mean to say that it was, but that it may have been the object, and that when that object shall have been even partially attained, I may be removed at once without the removal creating any additional sensation. If, therefore, you will be kind enough to go to the Home-office and obtain from the secretary a promise that I shall not be removed until after the trial of this man Tynte, I shall feel extremely grateful, and will you eventually have the satisfaction of knowing that you thereby saved from destruction an innocent man."

"He is innocent, sir," cried the good old curate, addressing the sheriff earnestly, "I know that he is innocent. I'll stake my reputation upon it, and I am a clergyman of the church of England. Let me therefore implore you to do all in your power for him. Save him, sir, and God will bless you for it."

The sheriff took the curate's hand, and as a tear stood in his eye, he promised to exert all the influence he possessed, in order that George might be saved.

And he kept that promise faithfully. He went to the Home-office on the following morning, and the result of his interview with the secretary of state was an assurance that George should not be removed until after Tynte's trial.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FAILURE OF THE BANK

The mind of George was now comparatively tranqui., and he resolved to wait with patience until Tynte had heen tried; but in less than an hour after the sheriff had given him the assurance of the Home Secretary, he received information of the failure of his bank.

During the whole of his troubles he had never for a moment compromised Waghorn: he had never suffered it to be known except by those who were interested in preserving secrecy, that he and the firm of Stevens, Carlton and Co., were in the slightest degree connected, for he felt, and most correctly, that if the fact were made public under the circumstances, all confidence in the stability of the establishment would be immediately withdrawn.

It required not this, however, to involve the firm in ruin: it needed only the continued absence of George, for Waghorn, no sooner found himself free from all control, than he launched into ase a of speculations, and recklesly pursued a course of commercial *diablerie* so perilous, that within a month of his having the entire management in his hands, the bank, which otherwise must have flourished, was never safe for a single day.

His folly amounted to a species of insanity, he was constantly risking the overthrow of the establishment by the quantity of bills which he had out under discount indorsed by the firm, the slightest irregularity in the payment of which would have caused an immediate withdrawal of confidence.

It is true he kept the account with their London agents in good order, and paid in the whole of his London receipts—including those of the various branch concerns he had established—repaying himself by drawing upon the bank; but the idea of safety with such an immense number of cross bills which he had out then, was altogether out of the question. The bank could not be safe: it was tottering daily upon the very brink of ruin.

Having pursued this system for several months with success, it happened that five rather heavy bills—bearing the endorsement of the bank—became due on the same day; and that wishing to leave town for a time, he entrusted one of his clerks with the money to take them up

when presented. Instead of doing this, however, the clerk absconded with it all; and it was not until three days after the bills had been dishonoured that Waghorn became cognisant of the fact. The London agents, on being applied to, of course paid to the very last shilling they had in their hands, but as that was not enough to cover one half the bills, while they refused to go beyond what they had in their hands, the intelligence soon spread, the affairs both of the banking firm and Waghorn were canvassed, and the result was, that the bank of necessity stopped.

George, on hearing of the failure, immediately sent for Waghorn, and was at first disposed to be extremely angry with him, seeing that he had sent him the most flattering accounts from time to time, representing the bank as being the most flourishing in the county; but when he came, broken spirited, and nearly half dead, George, instead of displaying any angry feeling, took him by the hand, and endeavoured to cheer him.

"Come," said he, "this is indeed a sad affair, but let us go coolly into the matter, in order to ascertain what can be done."

"Mr. Julian," said Waghorn, "I am ashamed to see you. I don't know what to say to you, nor do I know what you'll say to me. If you call me a fool, I deserve it. I was a fool, a wretched fool, to trust that villain with the money for those bills."

"But," rejoined George, promptly, "if there be nothing more than that, it may yet be got over. The bank need not stop absolutely for that! —in a few days surely we shall be able to resume payment?"

"But that is not all: other bills are falling due daily."

"For heavy amounts? But how many have you got out?"

"I should say about fifty or sixty thousand pounds worth."

"Fifty or sixty thousand!" exclaimed George, whom the amount completely staggered. "Why what in the name of reason, Waghorn, have you been about."

"I have been a fool: I know it: and now there's nothing left for me to do but to cut my throat."

"It is indeed folly to talk thus. For Heaven's sake let me know how the affair stands. What is due to the bank?—and what is the amount of its liabilities? We must take our notes at least out of circulation. Hundreds of poor persons as you well know will be ruined if we fail to do that."

"But will not that be called an undue preference?"

"Waghorn, you know, I believe, that I am not a man that would suggest an act of injustice; but those notes *must* be taken out of circulation. Something may yet be done with the bills to enable us to bring ourselves eventually round again. Let the whole of the accounts be placed before me. We must not give up without a struggle! I shall soon be again a free man, and as far as I am concerned I am willing to make any sacrifice in order that confidence in the firm may be restored, but at once let me have the accounts."

Waghorn promised to procure them as soon as possible, and he did so: he brought them to George the next day, but the affairs were found

on examination to be so desperate—the bank having been made liable for nearly a hundred thousand pounds, for which it had not received the value of a single shilling—that any attempt to go on again would have been madness. The failure was therefore complete, and George, whose name fortunately was not in any available deed, sent Fred down to purchase the notes of many of the poorest holders at fifty per cent.: while not only Waghorn, but his father, became so involved that the docket was struck against them both, and the old man died on the following day broken hearted.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

TYNTE'S ACQUITTAL.

GEORGE during the whole of this time was in constant communication with Tynte, for much as he abhorred the real character of the man, he felt justified—seeing that the happiness of those who were dear to him was involved—in doing all in his power to ensure his acquittal.

He therefore from time to time advised him on the course to be pursued, and retained for him the highest legal talent available; but above all he impressed upon him the necessity for struggling to have his trial removed from the sessions, feeling perfectly sure that if he *were* tried there the chairman would strain every nerve to convict him.

This struggle was accordingly made. An affidavit was drawn up, setting forth in strong terms the chairman's prejudice and incapacity as developed on George's trial, and embodying the affidavits which had previously been made by George himself; and when a counter affidavit —in which he endeavoured to answer the whole of the allegations—had been put in by the chairman, they were submitted to the judges, who at once saw the whole thing so clearly, that without hesitation they ruled that it *was* a case which ought to be tried before the highest legal authorities in the realm—the grand preliminary point for which George had contended.

Notwithstanding this highly important step had been gained, George resolved to leave no stone unturned with the view of making all secure. He had his attorney with him constantly to consult him on the various points which were, in his judgment, calculated to strengthen the case. He also prepared an elaborate defence, and supplied Tynte with whatever money he required, having been informed that when he was captured by Fred he had made up his mind to go to America, and had just left his place of concealment without a shilling, in order to borrow sufficient to pay his passage out.

It fortunately happened that at this very period Peter returned from Poyais—fortunately, because he was exactly the man not only to run about from place to place to gather information, having reference to the movements of Sir Richard and his friend, but to enter into familiar

conversation with Tynte, and thus to render the views both of him and George more clearly understood by each other.

Peter, on his return, was in high health and spirits. He had at least fifty fortunes in view; and although he was most sincerely sorry to find George in a position of so much peril, he looked forward with feelings of joy to the time when they might, together, carry out those important schemes, every one of which, according to his calculation, would realize thousands.

Grateful, however, for the assistance which had been rendered, he scorned to call upon George until he had borrowed three and sixpence to pay for a stamp on which to give his acceptance for the amount remitted to Belize, to enable him in comfort to return to his native land. This three and sixpence he borrowed of Fred, to whom he gave an I. O. U. for the amount, with a most solemn promise to pay within a month, which promise he held to be equal at least to a cognovit.

Fred was as highly amused with his safe I. O. U. as George was with his Bill of Exchange, but they never allowed him to be without whatever money he required, and he certainly was indefatigable in return.

The Old Bailey sessions now commenced, and as Tynte's case was one of the first on the list, all concerned became exceedingly anxious; Tynte himself, although he knew that he could not be legally convicted, was not at all sanguine as to the result: he was indeed dreadfully apprehensive, that having rendered himself by dishonourable acts so notorious, the law would be strained to meet his case by even the judges themselves; but, on the other hand, George felt assured of an acquittal, not alone by his own knowledge of the law, but by the opinions of seven of the most eminent men at the bar, independently of those of the counsel he had retained.

In the morning of the second day of the sessions the case was called on, and Tynte, trembling as if he had been struck with the palsy, was placed at the bar. If his appearance could have convicted him, his conviction would have been certain; but as evidence of this kind is not deemed legal, the case was opened in the most solemn strain by the leading counsel for the prosecution.

He commenced with an elaborate disquisition on the enormity of crime in general, and worked it up finely to the particular crime laid in the indictment, with the most approved forensic eloquence, which is prescriptively "all sound and fury, signifying nothing;" and having worked himself, by virtue of his conscientious impulses, into such a dreadful passion that he appeared to be more than half inclined to knock the prisoner's head off, he—conscious of the beautiful effects of light and shade—gave sundry tranquil touches of the pathetic with the view of bringing out the extremely amiable character and high respectability of the victim, and then rose again into a rage so potent that it seemed to be inexplicable how he was able to keep his hands off the prisoner, for he really looked at, and denounced him, with an expression which seemed to indicate an earnest desire to give him a sound drubbing before the whole court.

When this learned gentleman, who perspired very freely, had con-

cluded his address, the leading counsel for the defence rose to state that being anxious to save the time of their lordships, he was desirous of submitting to them then, without waiting for the evidence of the witnesses to be produced, whether, seeing that the admission had been made that the stamps upon which the bills in question were drawn, were the *bona-fide* property of the prisoner, any felony had been committed.

Whereupon the three judges conferred for some time, and having eventually decided that the case then before them was *not* one of felony, they directed the jury to acquit the prisoner, and Tynte was discharged forthwith.

At this moment Sir Richard, Joseph, Bounsom, and Cavendish, who occupied a prominent position in the court, seemed thunderstruck, and looked at each other as if the whole of their faculties had left them; and before they had time to recover those faculties, the counsel, who had conducted the prosecution against George, and whose *nobilis ira* had been excited by the fact of his not having been employed to conduct *this* prosecution, rose, and addressed the court as follows:—

"My luds: may it please your ludships: I crave permission to submit to your ludships, an anomaly of perhaps the most extraordinary character that ever came under your ludship's notice. At the Clerkenwell sessions, my luds, in a prosecution which *I* had the honour to conduct, a person named Julian—of whom your ludships may have heard—was indicted for felony, convicted of felony, and sentenced, my luds, to fourteen years' transportation. Will your ludships believe that the felony of which he was thus convicted, and for which he was thus sentenced, was neither more nor less than that of receiving certain bills, well knowing them to have been stolen; and that the bills thus received were the identical bills which he who has just been acquitted by direction of your ludships, was charged with having stolen, and which by that direction your ludships declare were not stolen at all! My luds, I beg to submit humbly to your ludships, that if bills be not stolen, he who receives them—be he whomsoever he may—cannot do so, well knowing them to have been stolen, and that therefore, my luds, the conviction of the receiver—when the principal is held to have committed no felony—must be bad in law."

"Is this the prelude to any motion?" inquired one of the judges.

"Yes, my lud," replied the learned gentleman, looking at Sir Richard and his friends, with the view of establishing in their minds the idea that they had made a mistake in not retaining him. "It is, my lud, the prelude to a motion which I shall presently have the honour to submit to your ludships: but before I proceed to that point, my luds, your ludships will probably permit me to state that the motion which I am now about to make, is on my part perfectly voluntary. I am anxious to impress upon your ludships that I have received no instructions from Julian—that he has not the most remote idea of my addressing your ludships in his behalf, and that I do so now as a pure matter of justice, feeling persuaded—since your ludships have ruled in this case that no felony was committed—that his conviction was illegal. My luds, I hold that if A receive a bill of exchange from B, which has in reality not

been stolen, A cannot have received it well knowing it to have been stolen, and that if B did *not* steal the bill, A by receiving it can have committed no felony."

"That seems to be clear," observed one of the judges.

"It therefore, my luds, I humbly submit, follows that Julian is entitled to his discharge."

"This is a case," said the judge, "of which we cannot take cognizance."

"But, my lud," pursued the counsel, "I would again urge your ludships to look at the anomaly Here is a man convicted of receiving bills knowing them to have been stolen, while the person from whom he received them on being tried, is acquitted on the ground that those bills were not stolen at all! Surely, my luds, it will not be contended that if bills be not stolen, a man can receive them well knowing them to have been stolen?"

"It is a case," observed the judge, "in which we cannot interfere. The person to whom you allude must be left to his remedy."

"But what remedy has he, my lud?"

"None," replied his lordship with a smile, "*ought* to know better than yourself. He can either petition the crown through the secretary of state, or bring his writ of error."

The counsel bowed to his lordship, and looked with an expression of triumph at Sir Richard and his amiable friend Joseph, who now clearly saw that they were utterly defeated

Long before this, however, George knew that Tynte had been acquitted, for the moment that acquittal had been announced, Fred started Peter off to communicate the intelligence, and remained himself in court to hear the result of the motion.

Of course George now felt that all was secure, and received the congratulations of his friends in the highest possible spirits. He did not, however, for one moment deceive himself with the thought that his innocence had been established by the acquittal of Tynte. Had he received those bills knowing them to have been fraudulently obtained, he would have felt himself morally as guilty as if the act of obtaining them had been held to be felonious; and as he knew that, in the eye of the world, he then stood in the position of one who had escaped just punishment by virtue of a technical point of law, he was naturally impatient to prove to the world that that was not in reality his position, and with this view he lost no time in obtaining the opinion of counsel as to the course to be pursued, which opinion was to the effect, that he should in the first place petition the crown for his discharge, and that in the next he should bring his writ of error with a view to judgment being reversed.

He did not, however, at all like the idea of petitioning the crown on ascertaining how it was necessary for that petition to be worded—praying for clemency to be extended to him and so on—he contended that his discharge would in consequence come down in the shape of a pardon, which of itself assumed guilt; but eventually yielding not only to the advice of his counsel, but to the earnest entreaties of his dearest

friends, who were naturally impatient to see him restored to his home, he consented to adopt the course proposed, and a petition was accordingly prepared and dispatched to the Secretary of State.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

DESCRIBES THE END OF TYNTE AND JOSEPH

In the mean time Tynte was hard at work against Sir Richard. At the time of his acquittal he had six of the bills, which were then overdue, in his possession, and these six bills were placed in different hands with a view to Sir Richard being arrested on them all.

He had not been acquitted an hour before he entrusted an amiable friend of his—a sharkish attorney—with the conduct of the affair, and Sir Richard was taken on one of the bills before he left the vicinity of the court. In this case, however, he was immediately bailed by Mr. Bounsom and Joseph, but this was no sooner effected than he was arrested on another: for this he was bailed and then arrested on a third; he managed also to procure bail for that, and was immediately arrested on a fourth—with the other two perfectly ready—but as he was unable to procure bail for this, he was taken to White Cross-street prison, and thence removed by habeas to the Fleet, when Bounsom, acting in conjunction with Joseph—in order to relieve himself from all responsibility—surrendered the knight in discharge of the bail and subsequently lodged a detainer against him in the most friendly manner for the amount of his costs.

Having thus fixed Sir Richard—with the prospect of his remaining in prison for life, for every "friend" now deserted him—Tynte at once turned his attention to Joseph, upon whom he was determined to have his full measure of revenge.

In the first place, he called at Joseph's residence with this object quietly in view. He was armed at the time with a stout whalebone stick, and being known to the servant who had received his instructions, he was informed with great respect that Mr. Broadbridge was not within; but as on leaving the house he happened to catch sight of Joseph at the window, he returned, and on the door being reopened, walked, regardless of the reiterated assurances of the servant, directly into the room in which Joseph was sitting.

As he entered, Joseph rose, and Tynte coolly closed the door, and having done so, commanded his friend to retain his seat, and then established himself directly opposite.

"I have called," said he, "scoundrel! to settle an account with you: one of long standing between us."

"What do you mean?" enquired Joseph, trembling fearfully as he spoke. "I owe you nothing."

"I know it. The balance is at present against me. I am here to *strike* it off!"

At this moment Joseph rose to ring the bell, but Tynte sprang at him fiercely, and forced him again into his seat.

"Attempt even to stir again," said he, "until I have done with you, villain, and it shall cost you your life. Now," he added, "what reparation do you mean to make? What do you propose?"

"I don't understand you!"

"What have you now at your bankers?"

"The bankers?"

"Ay, the bankers, have you two thousand pounds there?"

"No!—Nor two hundred."

"Hundreds will not do for me. I must have two thousand for the injuries you have inflicted upon me, and if you do not give me that, I'll involve you in utter and irretrievable ruin."

"But I have never injured you."

"Liar!—Infamous, vile, atrocious liar! You *know* that you have used all the means at your command to complete my destruction, and I know it too. Give me therefore, two thousand pounds by way of recompense now, and I'll acquit you: if you do *not*, I'll not only pommel you to a mummy, but reduce you to a state of destitution so appalling, that in it you shall die like a dog!"

"I am not to be intimidated thus by any man!" exclaimed Joseph, seizing the poker, and assuming a most valiant air with the view of frightening Tynte from his purpose; but Tynte happened to know him too well to be alarmed, and therefore coolly requested him to resume his seat.

"You know," said he, "that I have the power to destroy you. The law places that power in my hands, and if you refuse to give me that which I demand, I'll *strain* it till the ruin which you designed for me, falls with tenfold force upon yourself."

"Do you take me for a fool?" cried Joseph.

"Yes!—and a villain to boot."

"Oh! I'm not to be alarmed! Don't imagine for a moment that you are able to frighten me! Do you remember the forgery? Do you remember the personation? Do you remember that I have the power to hang you? Talk to me about law! I'll put a rope round your neck. Leave the house!"

Tynte stood very quietly for a moment, contemplating Joseph with feelings of scorn, and at length said, "I *will* leave the house when I have given you a sound and respectable thrashing."

Joseph again seized the poker, and stood in a position of defence, when Tynte fiercely attacked him, and wresting the weapon from his grasp, struck him violently near the left temple, and felled him to the ground. Joseph rose again notwithstanding this, and grappled with his assailant, but Tynte seized him tightly by the throat, and while holding him with one hand, administered so much punishment with the other that his face soon became one mass of contusions, and he eventually sank to the ground nearly blind.

Cries of "Murder!" from Joseph now brought up the servant, who was about to assail Tynte, with a view of proving to his master that he was valiant; but Tynte coolly instructed him to attend to his master's bruises, and then, with an affectation of calmness, resumed his seat.

"You shall suffer—you shall suffer—oh, you shall pay dearly for this!" exclaimed Joseph. "I'll do it!—I'll do it!—I'll go to-morrow morning to Bow-street and take out a warrant. I'll hang you! I *can* and I will."

"You beauty!" said Tynte, "—for you are a beauty now—do it!—do it, if you dare!"

"I will!" returned Joseph, who kept his servant near him. "The forgery I can prove, and I will prove it! Mark me, if I even involve myself in ruin, I bring down destruction upon you."

Tynte remained and regarded him in silence for a time, and then, with an expression of contempt, left the house; but knowing that Joseph had in reality the power to do what he threatened, he resolved to watch him narrowly, with a view of ascertaining if, by sacrificing himself to some extent, he intended to carry his threat into execution.

It will be necessary here to state that, sometime prior to this, Tynte had not only forged certain acceptances for Joseph's accommodation, but had, at his suggestion, personated a gentleman named Disbrow at the Bank, and by imitating his handwriting, obtained his dividend, amounting to about two thousand pounds—both of which offences then were punishable with death. He had therefore ample reason to watch the movements of Joseph, for although he well knew that he could not prove either without involving himself, he knew equally well that he had the power to prove both, and thereby to ensure his destruction.

Having dwelt upon this during the remainder of the day, he determined on sending the person who had been of so much service to him while in concealment, to keep guard in the morning before Joseph's house, and to bring him word immediately in the event of any attempt being made to obtain a warrant. The person in question accordingly went, and about twelve o'clock returned to Tynte with the information that Joseph had kept his promise—that he had actually been to Bow-street and charged him with forgery, and that a warrant had been immediately issued for his apprehension.

Tynte's rage on hearing this was unbounded, but subsequently, feeling that in order effectually to frustrate the design, it would be necessary for him to be cool, he sent his messenger to Joseph to state that he, Tynte, had an appointment the following day at a certain inn on the Brighton road, and that if caution were observed, he might be captured.

Joseph no sooner received this information than he resolved to go down that night with one of the Bow-street officers; but as the messenger, acting upon his instructions, suggested that if either of those officers were known to be in the neighbourhood, the object would in all probability fail, the plan was altered, and Joseph determined on going down alone, and procuring the assistance of one of the constables of the district.

On the return of the messenger, Tynte proceeded to disguise himself, and having shaved off his moustaches and whiskers, placed on his head a grey wig, and attired himself in an old fashioned sober suit of black, which made him look extremely venerable, he started off at once for the inn in question, which by virtue of travelling post he reached nearly three hours before Joseph.

He occupied of course a private room at the inn, and intended to return to town immediately in the event of Joseph having so far altered his mind again as to bring a Bow-street officer down with him; but as on the arrival of the coach he saw from his window that Joseph was alone, his plan was to return very early in the morning, having silenced for ever the only man whom he feared.

Night approached; and as they were the only guests, he had no difficulty in ascertaining in which room Joseph was to sleep. He therefore secured the key of that particular room, and having ordered supper, paid his bill, and instructed the waiter to have a post-chaise in readiness at six on the following morning.

All this was done with the most consummate tact, and without the slightest chance of exciting suspicion; for so perfectly did he sustain the character he had assumed, that the attendants treated him with the most profound respect, conceiving him to be a clergyman of some considerable eminence, if not indeed a bishop *incog.*

Precisely at eleven o'clock he retired, and as his chamber was next to that which Joseph was to occupy, he heard him enter the room about twelve, and in accents indicative of drunkenness, direct the girl to call him at nine.

The chambermaid promised to do so, and left him, but immediately afterwards he opened the door, and cried out, "Hollo! where is the key?"

The girl returned and looked for it, but of course it was not to be found, when Joseph said, "Never mind: run away; it isn't I suppose of much importance, but I always like to lock myself in."

The girl then again left, and Joseph soon afterwards rolled into bed, when Tynte drew from his portmanteau a bottle of brandy, and applied himself to it with the view of inspiring his soul with what *he* deemed courage, of which he felt at that very time destitute indeed.

All now became silent as death, and Tynte sat with the bottle in his hand, glaring wildly. He had never experienced feelings so horrible as those which excited him then. The bare idea of the slightest sound alarmed him. Still reflecting that he whom he had within his grasp possessed the power as well as the will to destroy him—he tried to shake off every feeling of terror, and to look upon that which he intended to do as an act of retributive justice. He drank again, and again, and continued to drink until half past two, when he took off his clothes, and having put on a dressing-gown, armed himself with the knife he had brought with him for the purpose, and entered the room in which Joseph was sleeping.

Having closed the door he stood for some time like irresolution's statue. The room was not dark: the moon shedding her borrowed

lustre through the casement enabled him to see his victim clearly; but the light thus imparted was of a hue so sickly, and its influence upon him so strong that he shuddered violently, and well nigh sank to the ground.

"Who's there?" cried Joseph, and Tynte at the moment felt as if some demon had clutched his heart to stop its action: he gasped but could not breathe while his blood grew cold and his flesh quivered with horror.

Joseph fancying that he must have dreamt that he heard a noise, soon murmured his conviction that it was so, and sank again to sleep, when Tynte, upon whose brow big drops of cold sweat stood like dew, tried to rouse himself again by the recollection of what he conceived to be his wrongs.

With noiseless stealthy steps he approached the bed where he again felt nerveless, and stood glaring like a maniac, until he was startled by the knife gleaming in his hand, when in an instant he plunged the weapon into his victim's throat.

With a wild gurgling cry, Joseph leaped from the bed, and grappled fiercely with his assailant, while the blood gushed from the wound in a torrent, but Tynte again stabbed him, and again, when maddened with agony, Joseph furiously flew at him, and with fiend-like desperation brought him heavily to the ground.

"Keep off," cried Tynte, "and your life shall be spared!"

Joseph knew the voice, and struggled more desperately still: he kept his hand firmly upon the throat of his assailant, while Tynte with maniacal fury used his knife, until Joseph with an effort which exhausted all his strength—wrested it from him and stabbed him to the heart.

The noise occasioned by this furious struggle had by this time alarmed the whole establishment, and when on bursting into the room the host and his servants beheld the scene which met their view, they were struck with horror. There lay Tynte a corpse, with Joseph who appeared to be dead too, lying over the body, while the blood which had gushed from their wounds during the struggle formed literally one coagulated pool.

A surgeon was instantly sent for, and perceiving that Tynte was quite dead, he directed the whole of his attention to Joseph, whose desperate wounds he dressed, and whom he eventually restored to a state of consciousness, but without the slightest hope of being able to preserve his life beyond a few hours.

And thus he lay, unable to articulate a word, or to take the slightest nourishment, except through an instrument passed into his stomach for that purpose, tortured not only by his wounds, but the vivid recollection of the wrongs he had inflicted upon those who never sought to injure him.

His cousin Fred was of course uppermost in his thoughts, and in the course of the day he wrote instructions for a messenger to be sent with all possible speed to bring him down. A messenger was accordingly

despatched in a post-chaise, and on hearing of the tragic occurrence, Fred returned with him at once.

Joseph was by this time sinking fast, but when Fred entered the room in which he was lying, he pressed his hand with all his remaining strength, and looking at him piteously, wept.

He then, conscious of his last hour being at hand, took a pen and begged of the surgeon who was present to give him something to sustain him while he made an important communication. The surgeon did so, and when the paper had been placed in a convenient position, Joseph wrote a full confession of the way in which he had acted towards both Fred and George; proving first that Fred was entitled to the property which he claimed: and secondly, that George was innocent of the crime of which he had been convicted, and having expressed an ardent hope that they would forgive him, signed the document and died.

His signature was attested by the surgeon and a magistrate, who was also in attendance, and having signified his intention to be present at the inquest on the following day, Fred returned to town to show the confession to George.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE DISCHARGE.

WHILE Fred was engaged in making the necessary preparations for Joseph's funeral after the inquest, the governor of Newgate received a warrant for George's discharge.

On the fact being politely communicated to him, George expressed a wish to see this warrant, but as it assumed that he was morally guilty, the governor being anxious not to wound his feelings, in the most friendly manner declined to place it into his hands. George, however, insisted upon seeing it—declaring that he would not voluntarily leave the prison until he had not only read it, but taken a copy—when the governor, finding that his resolution could not be shaken, gave him the warrant to read and to copy if he pleased.

"As I expected," said George as he perused with an expression of contempt. "A pardon!—It is kind of them to pardon an innocent man!—extremely kind!—particularly merciful!—Disposed to extend our gracious clemency! The king must indeed have a tender heart! It is marvellous that his majesty should be so compassionate as to pity and to spare those who have been guilty of no crime! I want no clemency. Justice is what I claim; I want nothing but justice! Were I alone concerned, I'd spurn their clemency. As it is, I'll send a copy

of it back with a copy of Joseph Broadbridge's confession, and request them to reconcile one with the other if they can."

"Oh, it is but a form," observed the governor, "a mere form."

"In my judgment," returned George, "it is a most disgusting form."

"But remember, Mr. Julian, neither the ministers nor the king—not having seen the confession of Broadbridge—have any knowledge of your innocence."

"They know that I am legally innocent: if not, the ministers violate their oaths, and the king himself commits an act of injustice to society by sending down this warrant for my discharge. Nothing," he added as he sat down to copy the warrant, "can justify them in sending such a document as this."

"Well, but don't you trouble yourself," said the governor, "my clerk shall copy it, while you and I have a glass of wine before we part."

He then directed the clerk to make a fair copy, while he, George, and the sheriff, who happened to enter at the moment, sat down to have a glass of wine together, and when both the governor and the sheriff had congratulated him warmly and with manifest sincerity on his discharge he, albeit highly indignant at the tone of the warrant, acknowledged with undisguised feelings of gratitude the many acts of kindness he had experienced at their hands.

"With all my heart," he added, "with all my soul—I thank you. You will have throughout life the best wishes of one who has been unfortunate indeed, but *not* guilty; you will have the prayers of her who, with her latest breath, will bless you for the exertions you have made in my behalf."

The clerk by this time had copied the warrant, and when he had read it to him carefully, George made him a handsome present for the assistance which he had rendered on several occasions, and having left with him liberal gratuities for the turnkeys, he took leave of the governor and the sheriff, both of whom had the kindest feeling towards him—and proceeded in a coach directly home with emotions of ecstacy.

On his arrival, however, Julia could not speak. She flew to him, clung to him, and passionately kissed him, while tears of joy gushed from her eyes as he embraced her. George wept too: he could not then have told why he wept, but he did weep, and they mingled their tears, and apparently depended upon them to explain the delight with which they both felt inspired.

When the first ebullition of feeling had subsided, and Julia, who really scarcely knew what to do with herself she was so overjoyed, had ordered dinner to be brought up as quickly as possible, they, with the Curate and Helen—who, in consequence of Tynte's awful death felt exceedingly dull—recapitulated the events of the three preceding days, upon which they dwelt with mingled feelings of pleasure and pain.

"And now," observed George, "when these events had been in his view sufficiently discussed for the time being, we must turn our attention

to those who have been kind to us. The first man upon whom I must call is our good old friend Bull. He is still, I hear, exceedingly ill, and I shall have to reproach myself with ingratitude if I fail to call upon him this evening."

"We may go with you," said Julia, "may we not? You will not run away from us so soon dear, after having been so long absent."

"I fear that he will be too much excited if we all go, my love."

"But we do not ask to see him. He need not know that we are there. We merely wish to go with you. You will let us do that?"

"Oh, certainly! with pleasure! And I hope that we shall find him much better than I fear he is."

Almost immediately after dinner they accordingly proceeded to Bull's residence, where Julia and Helen were shewn into the parlour, while George and the Curate went up to see their friend.

Although the fever with which he had been attacked had in some degree subsided, he was still extremely weak; but weak as he was, the very moment George entered the chamber, he rose from the pillow, and grasping his hand, welcomed him with energetic warmth.

"My boy!" he cried, "My boy! Oh! how glad I am to see you. You can't conceive—you can't—how glad I am; but I—*am* glad—my boy!—you have this night made me happy!"

"You are, I hope, much better?" said George.

"I shall soon be well—quite well—now you are free! The thought of being thus rendered powerless at the very time you needed assistance—the knowledge, my dear boy—the knowledge of the dangers which surrounded you while I could move neither hand nor foot—*that* has kept me back, my boy!—that has kept me back, I should have been about again long before this, had it not been for that. But thank God! it is over: thank God! you are free, and in a position to prove to the whole world that you are innocent."

George then proceeded to explain to him that that position had been materially improved by the confession of Joseph, of whose awful death he had not before heard, and having related the circumstances connected with it, without harrowing his feelings more than was absolutely necessary to enable him to understand the case, he and the Curate rose to leave, and, after promising, at his earnest request, to visit him daily, they quitted his chamber, expressing their hope that he would soon be restored to perfect health.

"How is he, this evening?" inquired Julia on their return.

"Ill, my love: very, very ill," replied George.

"Is he much altered?"

"I should scarcely have known him. His eye brightened when he saw me, but it seemed to have been glazed by approaching death: he was flushed too as we entered, but when that had gone off he looked ghastly."

"He is not long for this world I fear," said the Curate.

And the fear thus expressed was soon realized; for early on the following morning George was sent for, post haste, and on his arrival found his old friend just on the point of death.

"I have sent for you, my boy," said he faintly, as he placed his feverish hand upon George's arm, "I have sent for you to say, farewell. I am happy, my boy—quite happy—but I could not have been so if I had not seen you again. I have, my dear boy," he continued, as his voice grew more faint, "I have long regarded you as a son. You are my son—my adopted son. I feel that I have for you all the affection of a father. God bless you!" he added, although scarcely possessing sufficient strength to speak, "God bless you!—may you be happy—farewell—farewell."

George gazed at him motionless for a time, and then found that he had ceased to breathe, when he passed his hand over his icy brow and inwardly prayed for the peace of his soul.

"He is gone sir, quite gone," observed the physician. "He is past all recovery now."

George removed his arm gently, and having closed his friend's eyes, went to the window and wept.

And here he remained in silence, until the physician rose to leave the sad scene, when they retired from the chamber together.

"You are probably not aware," observed the physician, on reaching the drawing room, "that you are now master here?"

"I am not indeed," replied George.

"Such, sir, is the fact," rejoined the physician, "I am one of the attesting witnesses to the will."

And such was the fact. Bull had bequeathed to George, with the exception of a few trifling legacies, the whole of his wealth, amounting to nearly a hundred thousand pounds, on condition that he took the name of Bull, which condition was imposed solely, in order that he might escape the annoyance of being constantly associated with the crime of which he had been so unjustly convicted.

George, notwithstanding this, however, acted with regard to that conviction, precisely as he would have done in the event of his having to retain the name by which he had been theretofore known. He not only caused to be published a full report of the inquest on Joseph and Tynte, but sent advertisements to every paper in London, embodying Joseph's confession, and thereby proving his innocence to the world, while he instructed his attorney to bring a writ of error, in order that the judgment might be legally reversed.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE RECONCILIATION.

As George now removed to the cottage which had been left him by his good old friend Bull, and with which both Julia and Helen were delighted, for it really was a charming retreat, he gave up his former

residence to Fred that he might occupy it until he had obtained possession of his property.

This arrangement, however, had scarcely been completed, when George received a letter from Sir Richard to the effect that his eyes had been opened, that he had become quite satisfied of his having been deceived, and that all he desired was an interview with him that he might, in person, offer some apology for his conduct.

This letter was dated from the Fleet, which somewhat astonished George, seeing that he had no knowledge previously of his having been arrested, while the fact alone of his being there, if even he had no other spur, would have been quite sufficient to induce George to visit him at his request.

Anxious to embrace every opportunity of increasing the happiness of Julia, George read the letter to her, with an intimation that there was a prospect of their being reconciled at last.

"Then you will forgive him?" she exclaimed, with a look which conveyed a most powerful appeal, "You will forgive him? He is my father still, dear George!"

"And being your father, Julia, I am disposed still to extend to him the hand of friendship."

"I knew you would! I knew your heart too well to doubt it. He is—he must be—I know that he is, George, very very sorry for what has occurred. Do you not think that he is?"

"It is evident that in this case he was the dupe of Joseph Broadbridge; but I'll call upon him."

"Do, there's a dear! And will you give my love to him?—and ask him to forgive me?—and tell him that I am sure that he would not have behaved so cruelly to you had he not been misled, and that nothing could give me greater pleasure than a reconciliation?"

"As all this, my love, can be explained to him by you, with far greater effect than it can be by me, I had better perhaps not interfere. You will soon see him now, I have no doubt?"

"But you *will* give my love to him?"

"That I will do," replied George, who soon after took leave and proceeded to the Fleet.

Having entered the outer gate, he was accosted by a tall stout man, who had just passed through the lodge, and who, taking him by the arm, exclaimed—"Can I be at fault? No! It is Mr. Julian."

"You are correct in that certainly," said George, "but I have no recollection of you."

"What! don't you recollect that we had the honour of dining in May Fair together once, mind yar? Don't you recollect my antiques?"

George remembered him then: it was the Beauty! but so changed in appearance that he would not have known him had he omitted to mention the antiques.

"Times have changed since that period of existence," said the Beauty, when he found the recognition had become mutual. "They've turned completely rotten, mind yar: every body's artful: there ain't half the chances there used to be then."

"I may hence infer," said George, "that you have met with reverses?"

"I believe yar. Look at the togs! that's the pint. He who can't dress slap in this world may just as well cut away out of it, mind yar. He's *no* use. Nothing can be done in our way without togs. But

"Life's like a ship in constant motion,
Sometimes high and sometimes low."

I shall be up again, mind yar, by and bye, *praps!*"

"Are you doing nothing now?"

"Why a man must feed; he can't get on any how at all without eating. I'm a respectable candidate for the House of Correction now, mind yar! down to that at last."

"A candidate of course for some situation there?"

"Artful! But you always were innocent--in your way!" He then drew a collapsed bladder from his pocket, and having pointed to it, added, "that's it, mind yar! down even to that."

George now understood that he obtained the means of existence by conveying spirits into the Fleet.

"But," continued the Beauty, "if I had only five shillings independant of the floating capital of two and eight-pence which I must keep to carry on business here until something a leetle more decent turns up, it would be as good as a fortune to me, mind yar—I should hold my head up again, safe."

"Well," said George, "you shall not stand in need of that long; here are a couple of sovereigns: do the best you can with them, and abandon this disgraceful mode of life as soon as possible."

"I will; for it *is* disgraceful. I feel degraded even in my own eyes! I'll not take another drain in!—and I've just received an order for a pint and a half too!—but I wont *execute* it! if I do may I be caught! Then you'll lend me this money?"

"Oh," said George, "I give it to you."

"I wont, mind yar, have it as a gift. I flatter myself that if my togs are rotten, I have a leetle pride about me still. If you'll lend it, I'll pay yar when I see yar again—honour!"

"Well, well; pay me then when you are rich."

"I will," said the Beauty, "depend upon that, and I'll do as much for you another time."

He then took his leave, and George passed through the lodge, and having reached the door of the room from which the letter had been dated, he knocked, and heard the well remembered voice of Sir Richard desiring him to come in.

As he entered, Sir Richard who had scarcely expected him rose, and having bowed with considerable awkwardness, said, "Oh, Mr. Julian: take a chair."

George did so, and Sir Richard, who appeared much confused, took a seat directly opposite.

"I presume, Mr. Julian," said he, after a pause, "that you received

my letter, and although I have no right to expect that you will ever look upon me with any other feelings than those of anger, I felt it incumbent upon me to send for you in order that I might candidly declare that I have been acting in utter ignorance of your real character. Having read the confession of that man who has now gone to his account, and whom I knew nothing of until he introduced himself to me expressly for the purpose of leading me into the error—having, I say, read his confession, I feel that, though blindly, I have cruelly wronged you, and I now ask your pardon."

"Sir Richard," returned George, extending his hand, "although you did during that period of blindness pursue me like a fiend; although I have been persecuted cruelly by you, and placed in a position of peril so imminent that a word would have consigned me to utter destruction; although, with a view to the gratification of that which I deemed the vilest species of revenge, you bribed men to perjure themselves that you might involve me and all who are dear to me in misery, disgrace, and irretrievable ruin, I can still make allowances for that which you designate your ignorance of my character; I can still understand how you might have been induced to believe me to be a villain, and how you might have been prompted to pursue me as you did by the vile misrepresentations of him who was so interested in making falsehood bear the semblance of truth."

"Mr. Julian," said Sir Richard, "it is of course impossible for me to find a sufficient excuse for my conduct; but I am anxious to direct your attention to the position in which I was placed at the time; the destruction of that mine almost ruined me; and when to that loss was added that which I sustained by those scoundrels who absconded, whose surety I became, and in whom I had the most perfect confidence, I did think it heartless, nay infamous, that you above all other men in the world, should at that very time *pounce* upon me in order to complete the work of ruin thus begun. I was led to believe that you had done this: I felt indeed convinced that you had, and as your *own* letter at the time tended to confirm that conviction, I resolved, let it cost what it might, to punish you with the utmost severity. I was a desperate man: my losses had driven me almost to madness: and being therefore indisposed to listen to any explanation, I rushed wildly at the object I had in view; but as I now know that I did so unjustly, as I feel well assured that your aim was not to injure but to serve me, I again ask your pardon."

"That indeed," replied George, "was the only motive by which I was actuated, feeling as I did, that it might lead to a reconciliation between you and Julia."

"There again I was deceived. That hag—that housekeeper of mine—led me to believe that the girl had been seduced!—she was sure of it! she knew it! I now understand that she admits that all she then told me was false."

"It was indeed false."

"I know it: I'm sure of it! How is Julia? Does she know that I am here?"

"She read your letter; and sent her love to you."

"Let her come and see me."

"But how long shall you remain here?"

"Till the day of my death. I see no prospect of getting out before?"

"At whose suit are you here? I don't ask as a matter of idle curiosity; but I may, perhaps, be able to promote some arrangement."

"I am here at the suit of a man named Smith, but there are several detainers."

"Who is this Smith?"

"I don't know him: I merely know that he holds one of those bills."

"Those bills! Have you then been arrested for them?"

"For four of them, and six more are out."

"*I* hold four out of the six. Do you know where the other two are?"

"I don't exactly; but I think they're in the same hands."

"Most likely. Who is Smith's attorney?"

"This is the man," replied Sir Richard, producing a card.

"Well," said George, "I'll go and see about it. Are you here for nothing but these bills?"

"Why Bounsom has lodged a detainer against me. *He* has turned round upon me now. I could pay him, but with all these things pressing upon me, I don't like to leave myself penniless."

"Have you then lost all your property?"

"All. It's all gone—all gone."

"Well! as far as those bills are concerned, I have no doubt at all of being able to come to some arrangement. I'll go and see what can be done."

"It is more than I've any right to expect."

"It is not, sir, more than I will do."

Promising to return in the course of the day, George left the prison, and calling upon Peter, ascertained that the attorney in question had been on terms of close intimacy with Tynte. He therefore went to his chambers, and having found him within, introduced himself formally by name.

"Oh! Mr. Julian!" exclaimed the attorney, to whom George by reputation appeared to be known. "Take a seat, sir—take a seat."

"You are concerned," said George, "I believe in those bills there has been so much noise about?"

"Why—yes—I am!"

"How many of them have you?"

"Why—there are six of them out."

"Have you the whole of them now in your possession?"

"Why—I know where they are!"

"I understand you. Now, I have the other four. Do you feel disposed to purchase them of me?"

"Why—they're *worth* nothing!"

"Don't you expect to get something for your six?"

"Why—we are trying! but the prospect is not very bright."

"Well, I don't *want* to part with them."

"Work him! *I* would. The way in which he treated you was villanous! I'd work his very heart out."

"I think I could bring him to his *senses* if I had the whole of these bills in my possession!"

"You shall have mine. Come; I'll sell them to you cheap."

"Well, what shall I give you for the lot? At a word."

"Why—they are at all events worth five-and-twenty per cent! But give me five hundred pounds and they are yours!"

"Do you ever *expect* to get five hundred for them?"

"Why—if anything is to be got, I should say— But now, what will you give for them? come!"

"Well, I'll give you two hundred for the six—costs included."

"Nay—that's too little. I should like you to have them, I must say, because I know that you'll trounce him."

"I should not adopt your plan of keeping him in the Fleet: I should go a very different way to work."

"Well, but two hundred pounds! Why that's nothing! I'll tell you what I'll do with you now. I'll split the difference!"

"No, I'll give you two hundred."

"Money down?"

"Of course."

"Well, 'a bird in the hand is worth two in a bush,' you shall have them."

"Very well. Then come down with me to the bankers, and I'll give you the money."

Taking the bills with him, and delighted with the idea of gaining two hundred pounds by the transaction—for it was all gain to him—the attorney at once accompanied George to the bankers, where he received the amount and gave up the bills.

"Now," said George, when this exchange had been effected, "I want him out immediately."

"I'll manage that," replied the attorney; "I'll withdraw the detainers at once."

He did so; when George, who never left him until it was done, returned to Sir Richard and presented him with the bills.

On seeing them, Sir Richard stared with the utmost astonishment; indeed, he was inclined to suspect, at the moment, that George had had them all the time in his possession, and that he had therefore in reality been arrested by him. When, however, George explained to him how he had obtained them, he felt perfectly satisfied, and thanked him most warmly.

"And now," said George, "as we seem to understand each other at last, and as I should like to take you home with me this evening, you had better at once pay that man Bounsom."

"That I'll do, that I'll do," cried Sir Richard; and Bounsom was sent for and paid; and when that, which was the only detainer then

had been withdrawn, George and Sir Richard left the Fleet, and proceeded to the cottage together. On their arrival, Julia, who had seen them as they approached, flew with feelings of joy, mingled with those of apprehension, to meet them.

"My girl," said Sir Richard, kissing her as she clung to him, "all is over now."

"Then you forgive me?"

"Let us say no more about my forgiveness," he replied, "I have far more need to be forgiven."

"Oh, I'm *so* happy!" exclaimed Julia, "so happy! But you have come to make a long stay with us?" she added, wiping away her tears and endeavouring to look cheerful.

Sir Richard at this moment turned to the window, for his iron heart melted.

During the whole of that evening, not a syllable was uttered having reference to the prosecution, except in so far as Sir Richard's previous losses had been concerned. Upon that subject he was eloquent, and dwelt upon it, evidently in order to show them precisely the position in which he was placed at the time of his first interview with Tynte. And that position certainly was desperate; ruin stared him in the face, and although the amount of the bills might have saved him for a time, that ruin could not have been effectually averted. All this of course had due effect upon George, who made every possible allowance for the circumstances under which he had acted, and began to consider what was best to be done with a view to promote his future comfort.

Passing, some few days subsequently to this, through Hyde-park, for the purpose of calling upon one of Sir Richard's mortgagees who had foreclosed, George was struck with the appearance of a most audacious curricle driven in dashing style by one who looked like "a fine old English gentleman," with a bulldog by his side, and a servant behind sporting an undeniable cockade.

"What nobleman is this?" thought George. But the thought had been scarcely conceived when he found himself familiarly recognised by the "nobleman," who exclaimed,

"Ah, Julian! How do? Wo!" and pulled up his fiery horses so sharply that he nearly brought them down upon their haunches.

George now perceived that it was no other man than the "Beauty," who instantly alighted, with the dog, which he appropriately called "Beast," and took his arm, with many expressions of rapture.

"Why, how is this?" said George, who not wishing to be seen with him by *many* persons, drew him out of the path, "How is this?"

"Genius, mind yar: genius! Those two sovs have been the making of me: all sprang from them. I knew it would: I told yar so at the time."

"But in what way?"

"I'll tell yar: but mum, mind yar!—mum: I wouldn't tell it to any other creature alive. You lent me two sovs: very well; I only wanted five shillings, but you lent me forty. What did I do? I'll tell yar. I advertised money to lend in sums not under five hundred.

pounds, on approved personal security, mind yar, for the benefit of those who had no tangible security to offer. But this was not all. Knowing that clergymen of the Church of England were a good deal in the habit of overrunning the constable, and knowing besides that they are safe cards to play with, because, mind yar, they're such respectable swells that they won't make a stir or kick up any bobbery about anything that *can* be in any quiet manner arranged, I addressed these advertisements to them, and the consequence was, that in three days so anxious were the swells, and so numerous were the applications, I got fairly out of them upwards of ten thousand pounds worth of bills, which I sold again and got the money."

"Without sending to those clergymen a single shilling, of course?"

"Why you *don't* suppose that I'm much in the habit, mind yar, of throwing my money into the kennel? Had there been half a chance of getting any more bills from them, why then, of course, I should have given them a trifle as a means of creating confidence; but as there was not, why I left them to take up their bills without intruding any farther upon their valuable time."

"But," said George, whose curiosity enabled him to suppress his indignation, "how did you manage it?"

"Manage it! Why don't you know that it's the easiest thing in life to get bills out of men who are short of cash? I'll tell you how I managed it. When they applied, mind yar, I was a country gentleman: I didn't like five per cent, mind yar; I wanted ten for *my* money. What was the use of buying stock? I ask *you*, what was the use of buying stock with a couple of sovs, minus five shillings for the advertisement, and one pound five with the interest, for a coat and a highly respectable pair of breeches at my uncle's? Four per cent, three per cent, nothing per cent to buy in at 89⅞—what was the use of that? Not a bit: and as for land! The agricultural interest was going to the dogs! Corn laws about to be abolished: poor laws rotten: everything connected with the soil in an out-and-out state of insecurity of course, and, therefore, I wanted ten per cent for my money, but on most approved personal security—and I was not at all particular, for every security offered *was* approved, and thus I managed to make the swells believe that there was not another capitalist like me alive."

"But how came they to accept bills for you, a perfect stranger to them?"

"Oh, it's the easiest dodge going for a man of genius to be in! They want the money. They think of nothing else at the time. They have only to write their names and then they fancy they have got all the money in their hands. And what can be more easy than for a man, who can write at all, to scribble his respectable name across a nice slip of paper? They'll do it as soon as look at you! He who can't get any man who wants money to give his acceptance for the amount, has no genius. I had, however, one very artful swell to deal with; he was, mind yar, all art: you wouldn't have supposed that half the nature he had in him was much. He was right up to everything!—in life or out of it—nothing came amiss to him—just the sort of fellow to beat the world.

He wouldn't send an acceptance up to town! Was it likely? Not a bit of it, he'd come up himself to be safe: and he did come, and then I turned him over to one of my fellows, who, artful as he was, got his acceptance for six hundred pounds."

"But how?"

"I'll tell yar. They met at Peele's coffee-house to talk matters over and my fellow represented me of course as being out of town. 'But,' said he, 'there's a brother of his at the Bank who transacts all his business for him during his absence; but then you see he'll not consent to do anything for nothing. But perhaps you wouldn't mind an additional two and a half to have the money without delay?' 'Oh! certainly not,' cried the Artful, 'Oh dear me, by no means.' 'Well,' said my fellow, 'then perhaps you wouldn't mind the trouble of walking to the Bank with me?' 'Certainly *not*,' replied the clerical, 'I'll do so with pleasure!' 'Very well,' said my man, 'but we'd better draw the bill before we go; I think I happen to have a stamp in my pocket!' And he singularly enough had, and when the bill had been drawn and accepted, he and the Artful walked cosily down to the Bank. 'Now,' said my fellow, having led him into one of the inner offices, 'wait here: I'll just state the nature of the business: don't move till I return.' The Artful promised he would not, and if he kept his word he's there now, for my fellow walked out of the Bank with the bill with all the regularity of nature. Now mind yar, that's what I call genius!—and now-a-days nothing but genius will do. I'm making a fortune!—applications are pouring in daily!—its amazing how clergymen bite. And now I've to thank you for all," he added, "for hadn't it been for those two blessed sovs I should not now have been what I am."

"Then I wish with all my heart," said George, "you'd never had them."

"You wish I'd never had 'em?" cried the Beauty, who couldn't at all understand that wish. "Why you are not of an envious turn of mind, are you?"

"If I had known, if I had even suspected, the purpose to which you meant to apply that money, you never should have had it from me."

"But you don't mean *that*?"

"I do indeed; and beg that you'll never again presume to address me."

"Oh!—well!—I don't care, mind yar, much about that! but I'll pay yar the two sovs, and then"——

"I'll not have them."

"Oh! but you shall!"

George, with an expression of contempt, walked away; and when the Beauty, who had never in his life been more astonished, had followed him with his eyes until he was quite lost to view, he returned to his curricle with the Beast, and drove off.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN WHICH THE CAREER OF WAGHORN ENDS.

For some time George completely lost sight of Waghorn, and having heard nothing of him, either directly or indirectly, since the failure of the bank, he concluded that the step which he had frequently proposed to himself—namely, that of going to America—had been taken.

In one of the daily papers however, shortly after he had arrived at this conclusion, he saw a report of the committal of a person named Waghorn for forgery, and having made due inquiries, ascertained that this was the same man.

Being anxious to render him all possible assistance in the event of his being innocent, George accordingly visited him in prison, sincerely hoping to find that he had been falsely accused.

"How is it," said George, having drawn him aside, "that you are here? I hope that you are guiltless of this crime? Have you really committed forgery?"

"Mr. Julian," returned Waghorn, "as I know that the secret will be quite safe with you, I'll not conceal from you the fact that I am guilty."

"Good God!" exclaimed George; "why what could have prompted you to place yourself in a position of so much danger?"

"Poverty," replied Waghorn, "poverty. Since the death of my father I have been in a state bordering on destitution."

"Why did you not make application to me?"

"I applied to many persons upon whose consideration I had far greater claims, and as *they* refused to aid me, I became disgusted with the very name of friendship, and resolved not to appeal again to any living soul."

"But your mother has property, has she not?"

"She has; but not more than sufficient for her support. I could not endure the thought of living upon her."

"A very sad affair. I'm exceedingly sorry for it. But what is the nature of the case? I read some account of it in the papers, which stated the charge in general terms; but what are the particulars?"

"Why, Mr. Julian, although no blame whatever attaches to you, yet had I never known you, this would not have occurred."

"Indeed!"

"You remember having explained to me at my solicitation the process by which ink could be discharged from paper, and the surface of the paper so restored as to bear to be written upon again?"

"I do, perfectly."

"The knowledge of that secret has been the means of placing me in this position. I have removed the writing from the body of a check frequently, and having filled it up for a larger amount, received that

amount at the banker's, and I might no doubt have pursued the practice for years, had not impunity induced a want of caution. In this case, a check of Riddlesworth and Co. for eight pounds came into my hands, and having abstracted the body of the check, I filled it up for two hundred and fifty. Not wishing to present it myself, I went to the Old Hummums in Covent Garden, and sent for a ticket porter, whom I desired to go and receive the amount. I then left the hotel with instructions to the proprietor to hold the money until I returned in the evening, having then, as I stated, some highly important business to transact, which required my immediate attention. Well, on the porter presenting the check, the suspicion of the clerk was immediately aroused, for I certainly had done it in a most slovenly manner, and as it was soon, on application being made to the parties, discovered to be a forgery, an officer was sent for to accompany the porter to the Hummums, where they remained till I returned, when of course I was instantly taken into custody, and here I am now with no other earthly prospect before me than that of death."

"I am very, very sorry to hear this," said George; "very sorry indeed. A sad thing. With your talent for business, surely you might have got into something."

"I might: I might have got a situation as clerk: I know it, I might have got twenty; but living as I had been in the habit of living, and having had so many men under me as I have, how was it possible that I could ever have become reconciled to that? However, it's done! There's no chance for me now: my fate is sealed, and I must meet it."

George saw of course that pride had been his ruin, not absolute poverty; but as he would never unnecessarily wound the feelings of a man, he, instead of pursuing the subject, stated, that whatever pecuniary assistance he might require should be at his command, and left him with many expressions of sorrow.

Waghorn was an only son, and had, since the death of his father, been the circle in which all his mother's earthly hopes were centred. She loved him fondly, passionately: no mother's love could have surpassed hers in purity and strength, while it appeared to become stronger and more pure in proportion as its object became more unworthy.

For a long time previous to this event taking place, her infirmities had rendered her unable to leave her chamber, and when her son had been committed, his wife and her friends knowing well that the slightest intimation of the fact would break her heart, kept from her most sedulously all the public papers, while no one was suffered to visit her without first being earnestly cautioned.

The old lady, however, a few days after his committal, became most anxious to see him: she marvelled that he did not call as usual; she could not think what she had said or done to induce him to keep so long away; and when it was stated that he had been compelled to go into the country, she wept like a child at the thought of his having gone without taking leave of her. Her friends tried to soothe her by stating that he was called away in haste on most important busi-

ness, calculated to alter his position in life, and that of course he would shortly return — for they then fondly hoped that he might still be saved; but as the awful day of trial drew near, and every hope had been utterly blasted by the fact, that while few indeed who had once been committed for forgery escaped the extreme penalty of the law, there was not a single point that could be raised in his favour; they invented a tale with sorrowful hearts, to the effect that he had met with a most serious accident, and gradually prepared the mind of the poor old lady for his death, until the day on which he was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged, when they mournfully represented to her that, humanly speaking, it was utterly impossible for him to recover, and the day after that he was reported to be dead.

On the morning appointed for his execution, his wife and her sister —both of whom then lived with the old lady on Snow-hill—were summoned to her room.

"Oh, my dears!" she exclaimed as they entered, with hearts ready to burst, "I have had such a night!—such horrible dreams!—such phantoms—*Hark!*" she added with startling energy, as the bell of St. Sepulchre's church began to toll. "Listen, my children—listen to that dreadful bell: I never heard it sound so awfully before. It seems to go through my very heart! Some poor unfortunate soul stands trembling now on the brink of eternity."

"Mother!" exclaimed the wife frantically. "Oh! let us pray for him."

The good old lady clasped her hands and cried, "Heaven have mercy upon him! Lord receive his spirit! Though guilty may he enter thy kingdom. May he truly repent; 'for there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance!' Have mercy upon him. Spare him whose conscience by sin is accused that he may by thy merciful pardon be absolved."

The sisters fell upon their knees and prayed fervently. *They* knew for whom they prayed!—his mother did not.

In the meantime, he who was the object of their prayers, having opened a vein with the hand of a watch in the course of the night, had died.

He was found nearly lifeless when summoned to prepare for his execution; but although the most powerful restoratives were applied to him, before he reached the press-room life was extinct.

He was notwithstanding borne to the scaffold—as if with the sole view of gratifying the morbid curiosity of the thousands who had assembled; and when the rope had been adjusted, the bolt was withdrawn, and the already lifeless body hung stiffly from the beam.

A murmur of dissatisfaction then arose from the brutal crowd. They could perceive no struggling! they expected to have seen him *writhing* in agony; but as not a muscle moved, disappointment was depicted in the countenances of the majority, who exclaimed, "What an easy death hanging must be!"

After having thus dangled for the hour prescribed, as an awful ex-

ample to those who were either picking pockets or cracking ribald jokes, the executioner cut down the body, which, on being delivered to the friends of the deceased, was conveyed in a coffin to the house of his mother.

The poor old lady—who was almost broken-hearted—wished to see the body of her much-loved son; but as the whole of her friends most earnestly endeavoured to dissuade her, she at length, although reluctantly, yielded to their entreaties, and retired with the conviction that the view would but be an additional source of pain.

Towards midnight, however, her imagination teemed with a thousand fantasies, each having reference to her son. She thought she heard his voice! and anon she imagined him standing before her. She closed her sleepless eyes and called reason to her aid, but her mind was on the rack; her imagination *would* not be controlled; fancy reigned in the ascendant still; and when the recollection of the tolling of that dreadful bell burst upon her, she felt appalled! Was it possible? could it *be?*

"O God!" she exclaimed, in tones of agony. "'Was it *his* knell? *Was* it for him I offered up that prayer?"

She reflected for a time; it was not *possible* for it to have been him! And yet his absence had been mysterious—his death, to her, more mysterious still! She would be satisfied. The body lay in the room adjoining; she could reach *thus* far! Yes; she would see him—she would!

Summoning all her strength, she therefore rose, and sustained by the firmness of her resolve, proceeded slowly to the adjoining room. There the coffin covered with a pall met her view, and her heart sank within her: still, being resolved, she approached, and having raised the pall, found the lid fixed.

What was to be done? She examined the lid: two screws only were in, and on perceiving the instrument with which they had been driven in lying beside her, she applied it, and having drawn one of them out the other acted as a pivot.

And there lay her son! But was that her son? with features so frightfully distorted! with eyes which appeared to have started from their sockets! She fixed her gaze upon him; not a feature could she recognise. And yet—it *was* her son!

Struck with horror, she stood for a time breathless; but when on removing the shroud, she perceived the black mark of the rope round his neck, she with uplifted hands, uttered a wild piercing shriek, and instantly fell stone dead.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IN WHICH THE HISTORY IS BROUGHT TO A CONCLUSION.

As George—who had by this time assumed the name of Bull—possessed an ample store of wealth, his career as a speculator ceased; and although his mind continued to be as active as ever, expediency prompted him to live in retirement; for, notwithstanding his innocence had been clearly established, and the judgment against him legally reversed, he knew that there were many who would be extremely glad to seize any opportunity that might offer of associating him with the conviction, which he still contiuued to regard as a stain.

Fred, who very soon after the death of his cousin, obtained, with George's aid, full possession of his property, and who had therefore become nearly as rich as George himself, was his constant companion, and became by virtue of the conspicuous amiability of his disposition so endeared to Helen, that she seemed happy only in his presence.

Not a syllable, however, for six months after this period, was breathed to her on the subject of marriage. He had conversed with George on that subject frequently, and acting on his advice had abstained, during the whole of that time, from making any formal declaration of his attachment, the ardour and strength of which daily increased.

At length, having become very impatient, he resolved to ascertain, if possible, her feelings upon the point, and conceiving it to be wise, under the circumstances, to adopt a playful tone, the very first opportunity which fairly presented itself he embraced.

"Helen," said he, as they were walking in the garden, "I have a very singular question to ask you."

"Indeed!" returned Helen. "What is it?"

"Do you know—I have often wished to put it to you—*do* you know that I love you?"

"Do I know that you love me?" said Helen, looking at him earnestly, but with a smile. "Do I know that you love me? Well, that *is* a singular question."

"I must remind you that it has not yet been answered!"

"Can you expect an answer? Do I know that you love me?"

"That is the question."

"How is it possible for me to tell?"

"Is it so difficult then to discover?"

"What, love in a man? Believe me, there is nothing in this world

more difficult! He who can point out the means by which a woman can tell if a man really loves her, has but to impart that secret to render himself immortal."

"But have you no sufficient test now?"

"Upon my life I do not know of one!"

"Is not devotion a sufficient test?"

"It would be if we had a sufficient test for devotion."

"Well, but what is a man to do?"

"Induce her whom he professes to love to believe him. It is a sweet faith when firmly held, and not at all difficult to be inspired."

"Well then, as you don't *know* that I love you, it becomes me to ask if you *believe* that I love you?"

"What a very droll way you have of putting questions. Really I am puzzled by the manner in which they are put. Were you to ask me what flower this is, or what colour its leaves are, I then should be able to give a direct answer; but when you dive into metaphysics —"

"Nay; the question is simple and straightforward enough. Do you believe that I love you?"

"Well, suppose—I say *suppose*—I were to answer 'Yes,' what follows?"

"This: that the whole of my life shall be devoted to prove that there is no just cause for that belief to be shaken."

"What on earth *do* you mean? But in order that you may see with greater distinctness the extremely droll character of your questions, allow me to put them to you. In the first place then, do you know that I love you?"

"I don't: I wish I did."

"*Very* good."

"But *do* you?"

"Nay, that is a question. The answer was very good as far as it went, and I therefore now come to the second question, namely: do you believe that I love you?"

"I do!"

"Then my reply is, that I feel extremely obliged to you for having so high an opinion of my judgment and taste. But I find that you have not half the difficulty in answering these questions that I had!"

"How do you account for that? Is it because I am anxious to disclose that which you feel bound to conceal? Helen," he added, perceiving that she now fixed her eyes upon the ground, "although I have opened this subject with something bearing the semblance of levity, I beg of you to believe that I do not think lightly of it. We have known each other a long time, Helen—at least it has appeared to be a long time to me; but although I have never before ventured to address you, except as a friend, I have long wished to do so, feeling as I have felt, and as I still feel, that you alone have the

power to render my happiness complete. I love you, Helen—you believe that I love you. Tell me frankly, do you believe it?"

"I do," replied Helen. "I have long had reason to believe it."

"Then let me but prevail upon you, Helen, to be mine, and nothing which *can* be done to render you happy shall be left undone by me."

"Frederick," said Helen, as they entered the arbour, "you know of my unfortunate connexion with him who is now no more. During his life, nothing should have prevailed upon me—much as I have ever admired you, Frederick—to listen for one moment to your proposal; but now that he is gone, and I am free, pledge me your honour that whatever may occur, you will never again allude, in my presence, to *him*, and I am yours."

"Most solemnly," replied Fred, "I do promise this, and never shall that promise be broken."

He then with great fervour kissed her hand, and was about to kiss even her cheek! which was *very* extraordinary—when Julia unconsciously surprised them, having entered the garden without knowing that they were there. She, however, turned immediately on making the discovery; but Helen—although her face and neck were crimson—at once joined her, and was about to direct her attention to the beauty of certain flowers, when Julia whispered playfully,

"When is it to be?"

Again Helen blushed, but they did not remain long in the garden after that: they soon entered the cottage—leaving Fred in the arbour still—and in less than five minutes Julia knew all about it.

While this affair was being thus negociated, Peter arrived to communicate to George some intelligence which *he* termed startling.

"It *will* startle you, sir," he cried; "for it fairly startled me. It's all up with them now! all over!"

"With whom?" inquired George.

"Cavendish, Foster, Beauty, and all! They are all caught at last!"

"That does not surprise me at all!"

"Oh, but Beauty sent for me—he sent for me this morning, and wanted me to speak to you about it."

"I'll have nothing whatever to do with him."

"So I told him. But 'Oh!' said he, 'Petar, you know I was always very fond of you, Petar, and if you won't serve an affectionate friend, why, mind yar, you're not the man I took you for, Petar.'

"'Well,' said I; 'but what can *I* do?'

"'Go to him, and give him our compliments, and tell him what a pickle we are in, and ask him to let us know how to get out of it. I know you have great influence over him—I know you have, Petar—you can lead him where you like, and make him do what you please: a word from you goes a very great way; and if you don't persuade him to set his wits to work, and to chalk out some plan to get us over it,

Petar, you're not what I know you are, Petar, a very affectionate trump. You know he can do anything in that way: I can't. I have not the talent to get out of a scrape, I've only the talent to get in—I always had lots of talent for that. But depend upon it, Petar, if you don't persuade him to assist us now, we shall have fourteen penn'orth a-piece of it, safe.'

" 'But I know he'll have nothing to do with it,' said I.

" 'Oh yes, he will,' said he, 'oh yes, he will. All you've to do is to persuade him. Just look at fourteen penn'orth, mind yar! Fourteen! Only just look at it. Isn't it enough to make a man hit his sister? Go to him, there's a dear trump, and tell him I shall feel so very much obliged if he'll just suggest something, for I don't see my way clear at all.'

" 'Oh, I'll tell him,' said I.

" Do,' said he, 'and tell him also from me that if he can't conscientiously, mind yar, get Cavendish off, why never mind him, let him go, he's no use—it'll do him all the good in the world; only let me get over it, that's all I care for.' "

"And does he believe still," said George, "that I shall interfere?"

" Oh, yes! But I told him it was a mistake."

" It is, indeed. But what have they been about?"

" Oh, doing a piece of business together in the Irish provision line; getting over ship-loads of pickled pork, and so on."

" I see: under false pretences, of course. They may make up their minds, then, to have at least that which they expect."

" Am I to tell them so from you?"

" You had better keep away from them, Peter. Have no communication at all with them. They are a set of bad fellows with whom no man can associate with safety. Don't go near them."

" Oh, I have no wish to go near them, I assure you. I don't like them well enough. Oh! by the bye, have you heard of Mac Gregor being taken up for swindling in Paris?"

" No: was he condemned?"

" Why, he was not exactly condemned—that is to say he got off by a miracle. It is however clear from what transpired, that he'll never be able to hold his head up again."

This was the last that George heard of Mac Gregor, and the last he heard of Cavendish, Forster, and the Beauty was, that they were all transported for life.

As Fred and Helen had, from the day on which her consent was obtained, understood each other perfectly, they soon began to talk about the altar, the bridesmaids, and the ring, which are all extremely interesting topics of conversation, and upon which in every social sphere ladies love to dwell.

The day was fixed, and the curate, whom neither George nor Fred had forgotten, and who continued to receive constantly valuable presents from unknown hands, was solicited to perform the marriage ceremony. Julia was of course to be one of the bridesmaids, and Lydia, whose reason change of scene had quite restored, was equally of course to be

the other, while George undertook to perform all those arduous duties which devolve upon men who give ladies away.

It was also arranged that the honey-moon should be passed on Fred's splendid estate in Hampshire, and that the whole party, in order to make everything agreeable, should go down as soon after the ceremony had been performed as might happen to be convenient.

Accordingly preparations on a large scale were made, both at George's cottage and at the mansion of Fred, and when the morning arrived they proceeded to church, with the brightest eyes in all the world.

The ceremony having been impressively performed, they returned to the cottage to breakfast, soon after which the carriages drew up to the gate, and the whole party proceeded to the estate of the bridegroom, with hearts overflowing with gladness.

On arriving at the park, in which stood the old mansion, they were met by the villagers, who had been in the early part of the day by Fred's orders regaled, and who having given three times three deafening cheers, took the horses out and drew the two carriages up the avenue, which was thickly strewn with flowers by the damsels, who were merrily singing a bridal song before them.

Upon the ladies the effect of this reception was touching in the extreme. They had never witnessed anything like it before, they had never experienced such feelings of happiness; they wept, they were so happy: but when on alighting Helen's ears were assailed with exclamations of "God bless you, lady! Welcome, sir! welcome! God bless you both!" she was nearly overpowered.

The villagers having thus performed that which they conceived to be their duty, then applied themselves again to the ale, for they were really very warm, and their throats were very dry; but they no sooner felt in some slight degree restored, than they commenced a merry dance upon the lawn, and kept it up with great spirit till night came on, when they again drank the health of the bride and bridegroom, with about nine times nine, and with full hearts and stomachs dispersed.

To Julia, Helen, and Lydia,—in fact to the whole party, that evening was one of happiness indeed. They were delighted with every word that was said, and as for the place! what on earth could surpass it in beauty? It was in their view a paradise, and when they retired they felt that they had never loved each other so much: indeed they seemed to be in love with all the world.

"Julia, my girl," said George in the morning while taking an early stroll in the park, "How do you think you would like a country life?"

"Oh, indeed I should like it much," replied Julia, "especially in so lovely, so enchanting a place as this."

"You must not take the gay scene we last evening witnessed as a specimen of every day life in the country."

"No, dear, I should not of course dream of that!"

"You would have—except indeed on such occasions—to expect

to find it dull, very dull, when compared with the scenes of excitement to which we have been accustomed."

"Do you forget, love, that I *have* lived in the country?"

"No: but I cannot but remember that you have since lived in town."

"Still I much prefer the country; I do, indeed. I do not profess to be romantic, but I love to see nature as we see her here in all her beauty. Dear George, the state of mind in which we have been, since the period of our marriage, should be sufficient to cure us *both* of whatever love we might have had for a life of excitement."

"You are right, my dear girl—quite right; and I am happy to hear you thus express yourself; for now I can explain to you what I have been thinking of without any fear of running counter to your views. When I came down with Fred, some time since, to look over this property, I saw a very pretty little estate about two miles from here, which was then to be sold. I went to look over it, and was perfectly delighted not only with the house itself, but with the splendid views by which it was surrounded—"

"Do take me to see it, George!" interrupted Julia.

"Well, I will in the course of the morning. But what would you think now of my turning farmer?"

"A farmer! Oh! you don't look like a farmer. You are not *stout* enough!"

"That is certainly a very serious objection! But I *may* get stouter! There's plenty of room. Retirement and peace *may* enable me to get as stout as you could wish—perhaps stouter."

"Well," said Julia, smiling, "only let me see the place. I do not care what you turn, nor how stout you may get. If your description of it be not exaggerated, you cannot do better than purchase it at once, for in such a place we cannot but be happy."

Accordingly in the course of the day they drove over to the estate, accompanied by Helen, Fred, Lydia, and the Curate, the whole of whom were really delighted with the surrounding scenery; and as Julia was perfectly enchanted with the place, George subsequently made up his mind to effect the purchase, which he did, and in less than month had possession.

Being resolved to make a respectable man of Peter, if possible, he sent for him, and having reminded him of the fate of his former associates, and emphatically advised him to abandon those crude schemes with which his mind was teeming at the time, he offered him a permanent situation of two hundred a-year, which Peter accepted with many expressions of gratitude, solemnly promising to act with strict justice, and with a view to the promotion of the interests of George, which promise he kept faithfully, and by virtue of indefatigable zeal, became the most useful man on the estate. He met with every encouragement from George, who gave him a piece of land to cultivate for his own benefit, and made him many other handsome presents; and having married Jane—whom Julia had up to that period retained more as a

companion than as a servant—Peter felt himself to be the very happiest man alive.

One of the first objects of George, on obtaining possession of this estate, was to build an unique little house for Sir Richard—whose disposition adversity had materially changed, and of whom George had now become the idol! This he accomplished; and having subsequently obtained a living close at hand for his old friend the Curate—to the son of whose patron Lydia was shortly after married—he lived the acknowledged centre of the happy circle he had thus formed, by all beloved and honoured.

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